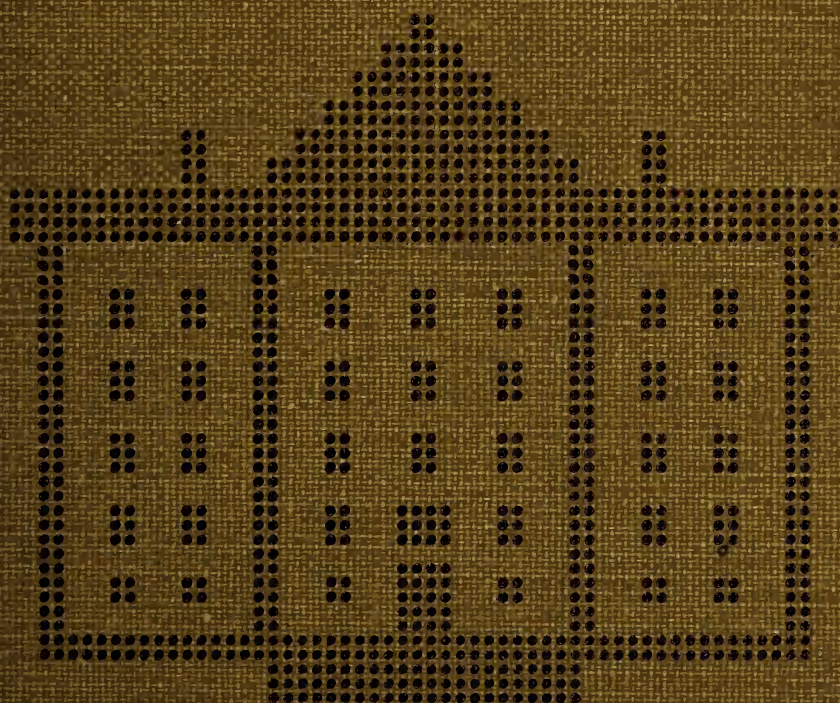


# FROM SHELTER TO SELF-RELIANCE



A History of the  
Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School



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ILLINOIS BRAILLE AND SIGHT SAVING SCHOOL

JACK R. HARTONG, superintendent  
658 EAST STATE STREET • JACKSONVILLE, ILLINOIS 62650  
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STATE OF ILLINOIS

DEPARTMENT OF  
CHILDREN AND  
FAMILY SERVICES

JIMI ANNE LAWRENCE - director

January 4, 1973

Dear Friend:

Enclosed is a copy of a book entitled, "From Shelter to Self-Reliance," which is a history of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School written by Walter B. Hendrickson. Because of your interest in the education of the visually handicapped, we are providing you with a gift copy of this book.

We are most pleased with the text that Dr. Hendrickson has authored. It should be a valuable addition to professional libraries of the colleges and universities that are training professional staff to work with the visually handicapped. The book not only relates the history of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School, but it traces the early development of programs for the education of the blind throughout the United States.

If you should wish to purchase additional copies of the book, you may do so by writing to: Jack R. Hartong, Superintendent, Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School, 658 East State Street, Jacksonville, Illinois, 62650. Additional copies will sell for \$6 per copy.

Sincerely yours,

Jack R. Hartong  
Superintendent

JRH:djd

Enclosure

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# **FROM SHELTER TO SELF-RELIANCE**

**A HISTORY OF THE ILLINOIS  
BRAILLE AND SIGHT SAVING SCHOOL**

by

**Walter B. Hendrickson**

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# Introduction

A residential school for the visually handicapped that has been providing for the educational needs of children for over 120 years has a history that should be recorded and preserved. This book was written for that purpose.

The Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School has been many things to many people. To the student who attended the school, it was a home, where he was prepared for an independent life, where he made many life-long friends, and of which he has many fond memories, joys and sadness, fun with childhood pranks—it is his alma mater. To the teacher, cottage parent, and other employees, it may have been home during the school term as well as a place of employment. To many of these individuals, it was a place where they devoted their life to a duty of helping blind children learn to help themselves. It is because of these many wonderful, dedicated employees that the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School has always been one of the leading schools in the education of the visually handicapped. To the citizens of Jacksonville and the State of Illinois, the school has been a source of pride. The citizenry of the State of Illinois has long recognized its obligation to provide for the special needs of children who are visually handicapped and have, through their generosity and support of IBSSS, made it possible to meet these needs.

The history of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School is also the history of the development of the education of the blind. Many of the innovative techniques, special methods, and educational materials, as well as the ever-changing philosophy of education for the blind have found their beginnings in this residential school. The adoption of braille as a means to make the blind literate, the battle over the type of braille to be used, and the development of a world-wide, universal braille code were part of the history of this institution, and the staff of this school contributed greatly to helping decide many of the controversies that arose during this period.

Since the early years of the 1890's when Frank Hall wrote a brief history of the Illinois School for the Blind, no additional history has been published. Through the urging of several members of the staff and the alumni of the school, the idea of writing a current history of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School was presented to the administration of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and authorization to undertake such a project was requested. Our sincere thanks are due to Mr. Edward T. Weaver,



Director of the Department of Children and Family Services, and Mr. Lee A. Iverson, Director, Division of Educational and Rehabilitation Services, Department of Children and Family Services, for their support of this project and their grant of approval to finance this undertaking through the use of bequest funds which have been left to the school.

We were fortunate to have available to us the services of an author and historian who has long been a great friend of the school. Dr. Walter B. Hendrickson, Professor Emeritus of MacMurray College, has on several occasions published historical articles about various aspects of the school's program. When Dr. Hendrickson was approached about this project, he was delighted with the prospect of such an opportunity and indicated a deep interest in undertaking the responsibility of writing an up-to-date history of IBSSS. It is primarily through Dr. Hendrickson's labors of several years that this history has been prepared and is available to the many friends, staff, and alumni of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School.



Jack R. Hartong  
Superintendent  
Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School

# Preface and a Note on Sources

I became interested in the history of the education of the blind and in the history of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School in 1955 when I prepared a paper on Frank H. Hall and his braille writer for a meeting of the Illinois State Historical Society that was held in Jacksonville. My associations with the school in the years following were many; as Professor of History at MacMurray College, I knew several of our graduates who were teachers of the blind, and I knew about the distinguished musicians who taught at both the college and the school. One of my earliest summer school students was Clarence V. Richardson, a blind man who taught handcrafts at IBSSS. From him I learned how to help blind persons and how to teach them. I was also socially acquainted with two superintendents, Robert W. Woolston and Leo J. Flood. I always enjoyed my visits to the school—students and teachers were friendly, and the cheerful and optimistic outlook of the school was a great inspiration to me.

For all of these reasons, I was pleased to be asked by Superintendent Jack R. Hartong to write a history of the school. In August, 1968, I retired from teaching at MacMurray, and I had the leisure to undertake a long-term project. Because I was an informal adviser to Miss Helen Sweeney, a teacher who had herself, in cooperation with Miss Miriam Russel, done a manuscript educational history of the school and who was the leading spirit in helping the Alumni Association equip the Historical Room to house the archives, I knew that the sources for writing a history were abundant. There were the complete files of the superintendents' biennial reports to the governor, and the reports made to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction; letters and papers of the superintendents, the manuscript trustee's minutes, and much material concerning the foundation of the school. A unique and personal source was in the memories of teachers and former students, and they were captured on tape to give a living record of student life and other aspects of the history of the school.

I also made use of the Governor's Papers in the Illinois State Archives, and the files of the local newspapers in the Jacksonville Public Library. Other sources of information were the *Illinois Braille Messenger*, and the *Welfare Bulletin*, the *Gazette*, and *Perspective*, periodicals published by the Department of Public Welfare, the Department of Mental Health, and the Department of Children and Family Services, all of which at one time or another

supervised the school. These magazines were consulted in the professional library of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School. Some earlier numbers were found in the Illinois State Library.

To obtain a comprehensive view of the history of the education of the blind, I read such standard works as R. S. French, *From Homer to Helen Keller*; Gabriel Farrell, *The Story of Blindness*; and Ishbel Ross, *Journey into Light: The Story of Education for the Blind*, but my greatest resources were the *Proceedings of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind*, and the periodicals, *Outlook for the Blind* and *The Mentor*. The American Foundation for the Blind and the Perkins Institute supplied those numbers which were not in the professional library of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School. There are no footnotes in the book, but a fully-annotated typescript is in the Historical Room of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School and may be consulted by arrangement with the superintendent.

I am grateful to many people who helped me. Jack R. Hartong was my constant adviser. He also read the entire manuscript and saved me from errors. Having been associated with the school for over thirty years, his personal knowledge of the school was extensive. The assistant superintendent, Thomas Svob, was also helpful in answering my many questions about the details of the curriculum and administration of the school. Mr. Hartong's secretary, Mrs. Doris Davidson, was adept at reading my sloppy handwriting and clever at untangling my much overwritten rough drafts, and she typed the entire manuscript. Mrs. Ila Mae Wilson, Mr. Svob's secretary was always cheerful about providing materials and answering questions. A third member of the administration, Russell Walton, business manager, responded promptly to my requests for stationery, fountain pen ink, a typewriter, and whatever else I needed. Another administrator, Henry Aldridge, the head of the social service department, was a source of information about the non-academic aspects of school life.

Mrs. Helen L. Curtis, school librarian, was my right hand consultant on the literature about the blind.

I owe a special debt to David Stevens, a blind man who is the braille printer for the school. Through the summer of 1970 I spent an hour a day with him reading the volumes of the *Illinois Braille Messenger*, which in addition to other important information, contained several pages of school news. Mr. Stevens, a pupil at the school from the age of eleven, after his graduation from college returned as an assistant to Louis Rodenberg in the printing shop. He was at the school during most of the period covered by the



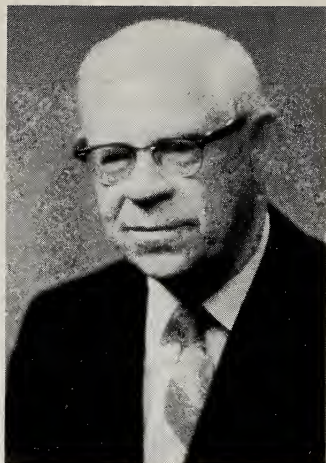
*Braille Messenger*, and as he read the braille to me almost faster than I could take notes, he also gave me his comments, and thus I got a unique insight into the life of the school. All of these people, and many more—teachers, housekeeping personnel, dietary workers, and maintenance men—were interested in what I was doing, and assisted me in many ways.

I recall the year and more that I worked on this book as a most happy interlude in my life. I was accepted as one of the staff and was included at all functions of the school from the daily coffee break to the graduation exercises. I am especially happy that I got to know so many students as we passed in the halls or as they dropped by my desk in the Historical Room where I did my writing. I am grateful to everyone.

For all these reasons, I had an opportunity to know my subject from the inside out. Some may say that under these circumstances, a writer could not maintain the objectivity that is traditionally the hallmark of good history. But I was given an absolutely free hand in research and writing, and I hope that I have given a balanced history of the school and its relation to the history of the education of the blind in the United States. On the other hand, I have been deeply involved in my subject, and to an extent I have written personalized history. Therefore, whatever faults, whatever biases the reader may find are entirely my own, and not attributable to my many friends at the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School.

I wish to thank Walter Rhoads Bellatti of Jacksonville, a great grandson of Dr. Joshua Rhoads, the second superintendent, for supplying me with copies of family papers and reading with a critical eye my chapter on his ancestor. I also wish to thank Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Cargill for reading and criticizing the entire manuscript. Both are graduates of IBSSS, and both were teachers there, Mr. Cargill in social studies and Mrs. Cargill in English. Mrs. Cargill is a writer and editor, and she made corrections and straightened out some of my awkward sentences, with a resulting improvement in style. Mrs. Bette Thompson, Assistant Public Information Officer of the Department of Children and Family Services, was helpful in arranging for the publication of the manuscript, and the final polish was given by Jean Block of Midway Editorial Service.

Walter B. Hendrickson



*Walter B. Hendrickson was born and reared in Indianapolis, Indiana. He received a B.S. degree in Business Administration from Butler University; an A.M. degree in History from Indiana University; and a Ph.D. degree in History from Harvard University. His major interests have been American intellectual and cultural history.*

*He is the author of two books and numerous articles in education, art, music, and science. Professor Hendrickson has been the recipient of grants in aid of research from the National Science Foundation, the American History Research Center, the Illinois State Academy of Science, MacMurray College, and the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School.*





**FROM SHELTER  
TO  
SELF-RELIANCE**





## Chapter One

# Beginning, 1847-1850

On a summer's day in 1847 Samuel Bacon arrived in Jacksonville, Illinois, and registered at the Morgan House, a hostelry on the square in the middle of town. Sam Bacon was twenty-four years old and had been totally blind since the age of eleven. His visit to Jacksonville was the beginning of a movement that culminated two years later in the establishment by the legislature of the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind. Jacksonville, a busy and progressive city, was already the home of the state asylum for the insane and an institution for the education of the deaf and dumb. Sam Bacon was in the city to investigate the possibility of finding employment at a school for the blind which he had heard was being built. His information was not correct, but he found the citizens receptive to the idea that they should found such a school.

Bacon was a physically active and intellectually wide-awake young man who possessed a persuasiveness and a sense of dedication that impressed all who talked to him. One of his biographers said that before Sam lost his sight he was "an energetic, inquiring boy on the farm and in the woods. He loved form and color and carried them with him all his life, and he had a wonderful memory. For some years his health was not good, and he often exerted himself beyond his strength."

Sam Bacon was born on a farm near Cortland, Ohio, on May 10, 1823. After losing his sight from a severe case of scarlet fever, he was admitted to the Ohio Institution for the Education of the Blind in 1838. During his first years at the Ohio school he was more interested in the industrial department than in academic studies. He wrote, "The first trade taught was brush making. I soon became a good workman and in my leisure time I was in the shop, while others were at play. I bought material and manufactured and sold brushes on my own account."

Sam was a mischievous youngster, and he said that "he was the worst boy in the school." It is more probable, however, that he was simply bored with his classes because they covered material with which he had become familiar before he became blind. All of this changed when the Ohio school, in 1841, introduced the study of algebra, geometry, and physics. Sam immediately became interested in the academic program, and he soon outstripped the other persons in his classes. His teachers were told that they must not give him any

help, because his brilliant performance was discouraging the other pupils. When the boy found the source of answers to his questions cut off, he said, "All the elements within me were aroused. With my change I bought some books, and pressed everyone I could into service as readers. I had previously formed a habit when I retired at night to review the labor of the day and straighten out any troublesome points. . . . At the same time I would take up a subject and work at it till time for another lesson." Now Sam was too busy to get into mischief, and he soon knew as much as did his teachers. He said that he "grew in favor with headquarters." When an additional teacher of mathematics was needed, Sam got the job.

In a short time the youth went through all the branches of mathematics, including the calculus, seldom relying on mechanical appliances to understand and demonstrate mathematical principles and problems. He said that he had "never experienced any difficulty in comprehending or retaining in [his] mind the most complicated mathematical figures." In part this reliance on analytical thought processes was a result of the system of instruction used at the Ohio school. Printed materials for the blind were scarce (a subject about which much more will be said later), and teaching was done orally. In fact the superintendent, William Chapin, defended this method, saying that "a teacher becomes linked to the mind of his pupil by a constant, living, active sympathy. By a kind of mental amalgamation, the mind of one literally flows into the other, and instruction is drunk like water." This philosophy of the education of the blind was especially successful with Samuel Bacon because he had such great powers of concentration and memory.

Bacon, like other dedicated scholars, was so absorbed in learning as much as he could that he was quite satisfied with his daily routine of classes and study at the Ohio school. Consequently, in July, 1844, he was startled and disturbed when Superintendent Chapin called him into the office and asked him what were his plans for his future life. Sam Bacon, now twenty-one years old, replied that he hadn't any, because he had been too busy to think about it. Chapin said that the young man was entitled under the law of Ohio to remain three more years at the school, but that there was really little more that he could learn there, and that he should go on to college. Bacon protested that he had no friends to assist him, but Chapin declared that Sam was mistaken, and that he did have many friends who had been watching his progress. If Sam would only agree to go to college, the means would be provided, and several colleges were willing to grant scholarships.

Bacon was doubtful that he could succeed in college, he also did

not like to place himself in a position of dependence on other people. But his teachers convinced him that it was only through human cooperation that success and progress were achieved for all. It was with much hesitation that Sam went off to Kenyon College at Gambier, Ohio, but, nevertheless, he had a very satisfying year and a half. (It must be remembered that in Bacon's time in college only a small number of students completed the required three or four years for graduation. Most stayed only a year or two and then entered upon their life's work.)

Bacon returned to teach at the Ohio school for the blind and was quite successful, but in 1847 he left his job. The reasons for this are not quite clear. His biographer, N. C. Abbott, said that Bacon left the school to take a rest. On the other hand Superintendent Chapin stated that the young teacher "manifested a restless energy of character . . . which impelled him to seek an opportunity where he could take the lead in some enterprise commensurate with his ambitions. For this reason he has gone west. . ." Bacon's granddaughter said that he came west because he wanted to visit his parents who had moved to southern Wisconsin. Bacon himself said that he was on his way to Galena, Illinois; later he did stay for some weeks in that town. Since he never mentioned going to Wisconsin, and Galena is at the northern border of Illinois, not far from Wisconsin, it may have been where the Bacon family was located.

It is probable that all of these reasons contributed to Samuel Bacon's presence in Jacksonville, Illinois, in the summer of 1847. At the end of the school year at the Ohio school in Columbus, Bacon had made his way to Cincinnati, where he embarked on a steamboat which would take him down the Ohio River and up the Mississippi to his destination at Galena. But some place in southern Illinois, as the boat headed up the Mississippi towards St. Louis, a man came aboard, and Bacon struck up a conversation with him. Bacon learned that the man was a member of the Illinois Constitutional Convention, which was in session in Springfield, the capital of the state. The man told Bacon that Illinois was building a large institution for the blind at Jacksonville. Bacon later wrote that "this surprised me as I thought I knew all such schools in this country."

The river boat stopped at St. Louis, and Bacon spent several days in that bustling city. As he walked about and took in the sounds of the levee, he thought about the information given to him by the man from Illinois. Finally the young teacher determined to find out for himself what was the situation in Jacksonville. We do not know whether Bacon continued his journey by boat, or whether he went overland, but probably he went up the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers



to Meredosia, Illinois, from which point a railroad ran eastward to Jacksonville, thirty miles away.

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So it was that on August 12, 1847, we find Samuel Bacon settled in the Morgan House. At once he discovered that the building under construction was for the recently founded Asylum for the Insane, now the Jacksonville State Hospital. He also found that the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, established in 1839, had received its first pupils in 1845, and that Jacksonville was an important educational center. Illinois College, founded in 1829, was flourishing. There was also a well-attended academy for young women, the Jacksonville Female Academy, founded in 1835 by the local Presbyterians. Another school for girls had just been organized by the Methodists, Illinois Conference Female Academy. The people took great pride in these institutions, and they listened with interest as Bacon told them about schools for the blind, particularly those established in the nearby states of Ohio (1837), Kentucky (1842), and Indiana (1847).

In talking about these matters Bacon also learned other things about the city of Jacksonville. It was the seat of Morgan County, created by the state legislature in 1823; Jacksonville itself was founded in 1825. It was the center of a rich black-earth agricultural area, and it rapidly increased in population as it became a prosperous market town. By 1847 it had about 4,000 people within its boundaries, and more arrived every year. Its leading citizens and businessmen opened stores, flour mills, foundries and forges, and bought up the land around the city. Wealth came to some men as they platted their property and sold lots to newcomers, or traded the products of the farm for store goods. The first railroad built in Illinois ran through Jacksonville. It was called the Northern Cross Railroad, and was chartered during the internal improvement excitement of the 1830's. It began at Meredosia on the Illinois River. By 1840 it had been constructed as far as Jacksonville, and in 1847 it had reached Springfield, thirty-four miles to the east. Springfield had been made the capital city in 1837, but for a few years it was smaller than Jacksonville.

The community of Jacksonville, at the time that Bacon came there, was made up of two streams of settlers. One was from Kentucky, and had backgrounds in Virginia; the other had New England and New York antecedents. The Southerners brought with them their traditions of large-scale agriculture, their interest in raising horses and cattle, and their enjoyment of great houses and gracious

living. The Yankees and New Yorkers brought with them their business sense and their concern for education. Both groups had doctors, lawyers, and clergymen in their ranks. Both groups had also a deep concern for religion, and Jacksonville was a city of churches. The Southerners were mostly Methodists and Baptists, and the Northerners were Congregationalists and Presbyterians. Although there were sometimes differences between the two elements in the population, there was never any bitter rivalry, and they worked well together in promoting their mutual interests. Representatives of these two groups were associated with the school for the blind. William Thomas, a Methodist from Kentucky, was a prime mover in founding the asylum for the insane and the school for the deaf, and a member of the board of the Illinois Conference Female Academy. Samuel D. Lockwood, also a lawyer, was a New England Presbyterian who was the first president of the board of trustees of Illinois College.

Probably the first Jacksonville citizen with whom Samuel Bacon talked was Dr. Nathaniel English, a leading physician, who was a trustee of the Asylum for the Insane. Bacon was introduced by Dr. English to others who were involved in the promotion of education and the welfare of the mentally and physically unfortunate. As Frank H. Hall wrote in 1893, Dr. English and his friends were "not only exceptionally capable in the management of affairs, but were deeply interested in every public enterprise [and] abounded in good works—religious, political, educational, and philanthropic." Among these men were the physicians Nathaniel English, David Prince, and Samuel Adams; the lawyers William Thomas, William Brown, Richard Yates, Samuel Lockwood, William Berdan, and Joseph Duncan; the college presidents and clergymen Julian Sturtevant and Albert Todd; and the bankers and merchants Mathew Stacy, Dennis Rockwell, Robert Hockenhull, James Dunlap, and William Happy.

Of these men, William Thomas was a leader. He was born in Logan County, Kentucky, in 1802, got his education in log cabin schools, and at eighteen was deputy to his father who was sheriff of the county. At the age of twenty-one he moved to Bowling Green to be Clerk of the Court while he read law, and he was admitted to the Kentucky bar in 1823. Although he had some small success in the practice of law, like thousands of other Kentuckians, he was drawn toward the newer lands of Illinois where, they thought, better opportunities for success would be found. Young William, with just the possessions he could carry on horseback, went as far northward into Illinois as his money and his horse could carry him. They both



played out in Jacksonville on September 26, 1826. His first job in the fledgling town was that of schoolmaster, but he soon found more lucrative employment in the practice of law and politics. There was then, as there is now, a close association between the two. This Thomas knew well from his early office-holding experience in Kentucky. In Illinois the great boiling pot of politics was the state legislature, and off Thomas went to Vandalia, then the capital, and got a job with a local newspaper as reporter of the proceedings of the legislature. Through his friendship with political leaders, he received an appointment as a state's attorney in northern Illinois. He served one term, and then resigned to marry Catherine Scott, a Jacksonville girl. He settled down, tying his fortune with that of Jacksonville and Morgan County.

While Thomas practiced law he continued to be politically active; he ran once unsuccessfully for the legislature, served as county school commissioner in 1834, was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1847, and several times was elected to membership in either the House or the Senate. His votes on bills that came before these bodies indicate that he was consistently conservative. He advocated sound banking, supported railroad charters, and sponsored measures to improve legal procedures. Seldom did he take part in debates on the floor, but did his best work behind the scenes in brief huddles with his colleagues. Judge Thomas (he served one term as a circuit judge) was always in the thick of the maneuvering that went on in Springfield.

William Thomas became a man of considerable wealth and vast influence. Like other men of the city, he invested in land in and around Jacksonville because he believed that the economic future of the town was promising. The railroad was a great asset, and a second boost came in the 1840's with the success of the Jacksonville men in securing three state institutions for the city. As has been said, this came about because their political power was great. Morgan County was one of the more populous counties, and it had a large delegation in the legislature. The members from Morgan, led by Judge Thomas, were all experienced in how to shake the plums from the tree.

At the same time it must not be concluded that Thomas and his associates were purely mercenary in the move to bring charitable institutions to their city. Most were upstanding Christian men, and they fully supported the institutions as proper agencies for helping the unfortunate. In Illinois they gave leadership to educational and philanthropic action by the state as did those public spirited men in Massachusetts who supported Samuel G. Howe in work for the

blind, Dorothea L. Dix for the insane, and Horace Mann for universal public education.

There is a tradition in Morgan County that a deal was made in the legislature at the time the capital was moved to Springfield that Springfield could have the capital if Jacksonville could have the state institutions. There is no documentary proof of this, but one does not have to depend on tradition to explain how the institutions were founded in Jacksonville. The story that Judge Thomas told about how Jacksonville was designated as the site for the school for the deaf, as far as it goes, has the ring of truth when placed alongside the great political power of the Morgan men in the legislature. Thomas said that Senator Orville H. Browning of Adams County in 1839 prepared a bill to establish an Illinois asylum for the deaf and dumb, but he left blank the space for naming the location. Thomas said that he approved the object of the bill, and "proposed filling the blank with 'Jacksonville,' assuring Senator Browning that all the delegation from Morgan would give the measure hearty support. Relying on the members and my supposed influence, he consented to my proposition." Just what political favor was done for Browning Thomas did not say.

Judge Thomas' approach to the politics of getting state support for public charities, as such institutions were called in the nineteenth century, is well illustrated by his advocacy of the State Asylum for the Insane. In 1845 when Dorothea Dix came to Illinois to lobby for the asylum, Thomas met her and introduced her to the legislators. The judge and Miss Dix disagreed violently on ways and means of attaining their common objective. Miss Dix believed that a bill that did not provide funds would be useless, and she gave her support to one that levied a special tax for financing the institution. Thomas, with his keen sense of what was politically possible, felt that the whole enterprise would be lost unless matters were taken a step at a time. He believed it was much better to move the legislature to commit itself gently to the idea, and then to get it to appropriate money. When the bill was finally passed it seems likely that Thomas' delicate consideration for the sensibilities of his fellow legislators helped to get the asylum for Jacksonville.

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It is not surprising, when one considers the power which Thomas wielded, that before any steps were taken to propose the founding of a school for the blind Bacon should talk with him. Thomas was attending the Constitutional Convention in Springfield at the time.

When Bacon arrived the judge introduced him to other political leaders, and the matter of a school for the blind was thoroughly discussed. Thomas was favorable to the idea, but he said that if state support was to be received, it would take "strong effort to succeed as the state is hopelessly involved. The people are poor and business is prostrate." He had reference to the heavy burden of interest and principal which the state owed on bonds issued ten years earlier to finance internal improvements.

Undoubtedly Bacon discussed with Judge Thomas the means whereby institutions for the blind had been founded in other states. Bacon must have pointed out that the first three schools, all founded in 1832, were those in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, and that each of these schools had been established with private funds. It was only after the feasibility of teaching blind young people had been demonstrated that the state legislatures had provided money to support the schools. To demonstrate feasibility, pupils were taken on tour to give "exhibitions" for the legislators and for the general public, and thus show what it was possible for blind children to learn. At the same time the need for education of the blind was emphasized by taking a census to show that there were many blind persons who would benefit from instruction.

Bacon thus received encouragement from Judge Thomas, Dr. English, and others to work for the establishment of a school for the blind. He had already aroused much interest in Jacksonville, not only because the leading citizens saw the advantage of having another state institution, but because they became genuinely interested in what could be done to help the blind. Bacon himself attracted them. There is an often told story about the young man and his remarkable mathematical ability. As Dr. English was introducing the blind man around town, they came to the store operated by John W. Lathrop. As they were talking with Lathrop, a customer came in to pay a note that was due the merchant. As the two men discussed how much interest was payable, Bacon overheard them, and on asking how much was the principal and the interest rate, almost immediately he gave the correct amount. This amazed Lathrop and the others in the store, and Lathrop himself became an early contributor to a fund with which to establish a private school for the blind. Everywhere he went Bacon astonished people because of his quick mind and abundant energy. He inquired if there were any blind children in the neighborhood, and was told that there were two in Lynnville, a settlement eight miles west of Jacksonville. Without waiting for any kind of transportation, he hiked out there over previously unknown roads. He visited with the children who were



brother and sister, stayed the night with the parents, and walked back to Jacksonville the next morning.

These exploits won the confidence of the people of Jacksonville, and Bacon was assured that the possibility of establishing a school was very good. By one means or another, he got the names of persons in the various counties of the state and asked them to report how many blind children were there. Several letters from this correspondence are in the Samuel Bacon Papers in the Historical Room of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School. Typical of them is a communication from Isaac Davis, agent. He said, "Miss Chism, about twenty-two years old, lives between Chesterfield and Kirksville, Macoupin County. Five in the family, south of Edwardsville, Madison County. Two or three of them grown, perhaps in the poor house, named Callahan. A blind girl at Marine, Madison County, nineteen years old. Two young men and a young woman named McCormick, about three miles south of Eden, Randolph County, nearly blind. A son of John Towle, near Martinsville, Clark County. A son of Rev. William Curtis, one and a half years old, Taylorville, Christian County. Two children of Matthew Durbin, ten and fifteen years old, Taylorville, Christian County."

To arouse further interest in the blind, Bacon persuaded Aaron Rose, a musician who had been a fellow student at the Ohio Institution for the Blind, to come to Jacksonville and set himself up as a teacher of music.

In the meantime Thomas and his associates determined to test reaction toward the establishment of a private school, and on December 10, 1847, a public meeting was held in the Methodist Church. At this meeting Judge William Brown presided and James C. Berdan was appointed secretary. President Julian M. Sturtevant of Illinois College offered a resolution that declared it to be "expedient" to found a school for the blind in Jacksonville, and to name a committee to get subscriptions for two years' support. The resolution also provided that a teacher be employed, a class of eight pupils be organized, and "when possible give an exhibition before the legislature, and solicit a law establishing a state institution." The committee consisted of David A. Smith, William Thomas, the Rev. Albert Todd, Dr. Nathaniel English, Dr. David Prince, Richard Yates, James Berdan, and William Brown. All but the doctors and clergymen were lawyers and landowners.

At this point in the proceedings, a young Methodist clergyman, the Rev. William H. Milburn, a blind man himself, threatened to upset the careful planning that had gone into the meeting. He was a persuasive speaker, and had traveled widely in Illinois. Later in

life he had a national reputation as an orator, being known as "Blind Man Eloquent." In 1847 he was employed as a financial agent—that is, money-raiser—for the newly founded Illinois Conference Female Academy, an institution that held its first classes in 1848. Milburn offered a resolution strongly supporting the plan to establish a school and appeal to the state legislature for support. But he advocated that money be raised to purchase the building now occupied by the Jacksonville Female Academy. He said that if the legislature were offered a building already equipped, it would "only be a fair return by the people of Jacksonville for past favors of the state, and while it would at the same time be one of those which eminently profits the giver." It seems clear that Milburn had not consulted the promoters of the meeting, and it is not known why he made this suggestion. Milburn also moved that a subscription be opened to provide funds for purchasing the Academy building. His motion was referred to a committee, and nothing more was heard of the matter.

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Meanwhile pledges were received for the school as proposed by President Sturtevant. Probably the contributors had already been contacted, because immediately after the meeting it was announced that sufficient money had been received. Judge Thomas, early in the discussion about establishing the school, had made it clear that since he was already on the board of the Asylum for the Insane, the school for the deaf, and the Illinois Conference Female Academy, he would not be able to take an active part. At the same time he was deeply concerned, and he led the subscription list with a pledge of \$100. There were two other \$100 pledges, many \$10 to \$50, and even some of as little as \$3 and \$5. A fund of about \$400 was assured, and a board of trustees was named to make arrangements for getting the school into operation. The president was Dr. Nathaniel English, and assisting him were J. O. King and James Berdan. Bacon was authorized to proceed with recruiting.

Soon after this meeting Bacon went to Galena to see his family. Along the way he continued to collect information about the number of blind persons in the state. While in Galena he became ill, and he did not come back to Jacksonville until March. He conferred with Judge Thomas and the officers of the school, and he was authorized to secure a few pupils and open the school as soon as possible. After visiting over sixty blind youths he found six whom he thought could be quickly taught so that they would make a good impression on the



legislature. Four of them, George Springer, John Jones, and Joseph and Nancy Fielding (brother and sister) were sent to Jacksonville, and on June 5, 1848, Bacon opened his school in a frame house on North Main Street, near the railroad, rented from Murray McConnell.

Dr. English employed as housekeeper and matron Mrs. Sarah Graves, a widow with children. She agreed to give "good board and washing," and to keep straight the bedrooms and the schoolroom for \$1.50 a person per week; in return she would pay \$60 a year for the part of the house used by her family. The board of trustees advanced \$30 so that she could purchase supplies, and equip the house with beds, bedding, schoolroom furniture, and other necessities. Bacon himself made a trip to the Kentucky Institution for the Education of the Blind at Louisville, and to his old school at Columbus, Ohio, to get books, writing frames, and other "indispensable instruments of instruction."

Sam Bacon received no pay for his services in making the survey of blind children, nor for his work in teaching and managing the private school, but he did receive his board and room once the school was opened. Until that time he either had a private income, or earned his way by making brushes, a trade at which, as has been noted, he was an expert. He was commended by the people of Jacksonville for his "able and untiring personal services . . . to this noble cause of piety and philanthropy."

The young teacher, assisted by Mrs. Graves and her daughter, Sarah, gave an intensive course of study. By December, 1848, the pupils had learned to sing twenty songs, and had gained some facility in reading parts of the Bible printed in raised letters. They could also do problems in mental arithmetic, including fractions, and extracting square roots. By the end of the year Bacon felt that his charges were prepared to give an exhibition before the legislature, which would meet in Springfield in January, 1849. To prepare an appeal to the legislature (its official name was General Assembly), a public meeting was called on December 23, 1848, with William Thomas in the chair. The board of trustees reported on the operation of the school, and it was then moved that it should be continued, the number of pupils should be increased, and additional funds should be raised to support it until the legislature could take over its support. It was also moved that the Morgan County members of the legislature be "requested to procure a legislative enactment for the permanent establishment of an institution for the blind, or in some other way make an appropriation for the support of blind children."

To convince the General Assembly that the people of Jacksonville

were willing to do all they could to promote a school, a committee was appointed to purchase "a suitable site and aid in the construction of a proper building." As it turned out, it was not necessary to support the private school for another year because the legislature responded favorably to the appeal to establish an institution for the education of the blind as proposed in a memorial which a committee of Jacksonville citizens prepared.

The memorial was a significant document, not only because the legislature acted favorably upon it, but because it contained a good statement of the prevailing attitude in the United States toward blind persons, especially young ones. The memorial told the story of a blind boy that Samuel Bacon found living near Quincy in Adams County. The child was an orphan "with no prospect before him but to be fed by hand, often the cold hand of public charity, in utter darkness of mind and body till his time to die should come. Several maniacs were inmates of the same dwelling." The child was one of the pupils that Bacon taught at his school and presented to the legislature, and the memorial pointed out that "through this benevolent institution hope has dawned upon him. He has begun to taste the sweets of knowledge, and the blessings of a rational existence. For the support of this unfortunate youth, the County of Adams, as well as individual friends, have generously contributed." This reflects the common view that it was an act of philanthropy to take care of the blind and help them to a happier life. To this extent the support of the blind was a charitable obligation of society. But the memorial pointed out that the school in Jacksonville was a private charity and could care for only a few of the many unfortunate blind persons; only the state could undertake an enterprise of such magnitude. The memorial did not mention it, but it was already well-established that Illinois had such an obligation, because it had provided a school for the deaf.

On the other hand the memorial went further than to say that the establishment of a school for the blind was an act of charity. It also declared that the state had undertaken to provide an education for every child, and "in justice is bound to give blind children an education in a form in which they can enjoy its benefits." Very probably this was William Thomas' point-of-view because he had always been an advocate of public education for every child. From the standpoint of the 1970's, when the state provides special education for all those who cannot be taught in the standard school program, this is the most cogent argument for a state-supported school for the blind and partially sighted. Yet, as one reads the literature concerning the beginnings of education for the blind, one discovers that it was an

argument seldom used. Rather, as was also stated in the memorial, the blind had a claim on the humanity of the citizenry, and "no enlightened and Christian people will grudge the few thousand dollars to help the unfortunate. . . . The blessings of God will accrue to the state which is philanthropic and compassionate." And finally the memorial urged upon the legislature that education may remove the blind from public charge: "It is the object and result of a well-conducted institution for the education of the blind not only to give them mental culture which is of course of inestimable value to one doomed to total darkness for life, but to impart to them such skill as will qualify them to depend for a livelihood on their own industry." It pointed out that many blind people were fine musicians, brilliant mathematicians, or eloquent speakers and preachers, and that, for many, mechanical or handcraft skills were the means of self-support.

The memorial was prepared by a committee whose members were Julian M. Sturtevant (chairman), James Berdan, Dennis Rockwell, William Happy, Joseph Morton, J. Heslip, Samuel Hunt, and Samuel Lockwood. It is not known who was the penman, but the ideas presented reflect the educational views of Samuel Bacon and William Thomas.

In support of the memorial, as we have noted, Bacon took his four pupils to Springfield, and on January 3 and 4, 1849, they gave an exhibition of the skills that had been imparted to them by their teacher. We do not have direct information about the demonstrations, but probably they were much like those presented by Samuel G. Howe in many places in the East and Middle West. For example, in 1842, when people in Louisville were attempting to get the Kentucky legislature to support, or take over, a private school for the blind, Howe brought some of his Massachusetts School for the Blind pupils to Frankfort to appear before the legislature, and then took them to Louisville to give further exhibitions. First Howe talked about the aims of education of the blind and displayed the books that were used, "They are printed on thick paper without ink, and the surface of each letter is raised or embossed." Next "a pretty little blind girl about ten years old was brought forward and her finger placed upon the page, then she began to read slowly in a soft, sweet voice, while the audience held their breath to catch her accents." Other children also read, some of them from the Bible, and then all the children sang some songs. This was followed by "examples of mathematical calculation, and a little boy showed the method of writing, and wrote several sentences in a perfect, legible hand, using a frame with wires to guide him." The exhibition was closed with a



display of handwork: bead mats, baskets, brooms, brushes, embroidery and so on.

Probably Bacon's pupils did not present quite as elaborate a show as this, but it must have been of high quality, because Bacon had especially selected his pupils with the appearance before the legislature in mind. The audience in Springfield must have reacted in much the same way as did that in Louisville. The reporter for the *Louisville Journal* said that the people were especially interested in the "happy and even playful appearance of the blind children," and among the listeners "tears and smiles seemed struggling for mastery." Finally, Bacon's pupils, as did those of Howe, proved overwhelmingly "the perfect feasibility of teaching the blind." Distasteful as such exhibitions are to twentieth century educators, they served a most useful purpose at a time when it was the common belief of uninformed and uneducated persons that all that could be done for those deprived of sight was to clothe, feed, and shelter them from the harshness of a world they could not see.

The subtle hand of William Thomas was clearly at work in Springfield in January, 1849. Shortly after the exhibition by Bacon's pupils, bills were introduced into the legislature. The bills were written by Thomas, but since he was not at the moment a member of the legislature, they were introduced in the house by Richard Yates and in the senate by Newton Cloud. The result was an "Act to Establish the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind," signed into law by Governor Augustus C. French on January 13, 1849. The very speed with which the bill was introduced, went through first and second reading, enrollment, and signing attests to the thoroughness with which Thomas and the members of the Morgan County delegation had prepared the way. There is a hint that the Jacksonville leaders were assured of success even before the session of the legislature began. In December, 1848, Dr. English and the other members of the board of the private school planned to discontinue it, and notified Murray McConnell that his house would not be needed after January 8.

With the successful passage of the bill, the children were sent home to await the opening of the state-supported Institution for the Education of the Blind. The school was incorporated with Samuel D. Lockwood, Dennis Rockwell, James Dunlap, William W. Happy, and Samuel Hunt named as trustees. All of these men had had experience on the boards of one or another of the state institutions or the private schools and colleges. The law stated that the objects of the new institution were "to continue and maintain the school for the education of the blind [that is, the private school] . . . and to

qualify as far as is practicable, that unfortunate class of persons for the enjoyment of the blessings of free government, obtaining the means of subsistence, and the discharge of those duties, social and political, devolving upon American citizens." It was directed that the school continue to be in Jacksonville, and that the trustees were to purchase a suitable plot of ground, containing at least ten acres and not more than forty. On this lot the trustees were to put up a proper building. To accomplish this and all other objects of the law, the trustees were given the power to employ a principal and teachers, fix their salaries, determine the curriculum, and employ all necessary personnel. The trustees were required to furnish a bond satisfactory to the governor of the state.

All blind persons in Illinois "of suitable age and capacity to receive instruction" were admitted without charge (pupils from outside of the state might be accepted, if there was room for them, for a fee of \$100 a year). To pay the expenses of the school, a 1/10 mill tax was levied on all property and other tax sources in the state. Similar financial arrangements had been made for the Asylum for the Insane and the Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb. As the state treasurer received the tax money from the counties, it was placed in a separate fund. The trustees then applied to the governor to release the money to them, and he authorized the state auditor to issue warrants drawn on the state treasurer. This cumbersome method of finance was maintained for several years before it was replaced by the system of specific appropriation out of the general revenues of the state. Under the special tax and warrant system, the trustees were never certain of the amount they might spend, and further, the warrants could not always be redeemed at once by the state treasurer, and the trustees had to sell them on the market at less than their face value. But the law of 1849 did provide that \$3,000 be appropriated out of the state general fund to be applied toward construction of a building.

The new board of trustees met on February 3, 1849, in the office of lawyer James Berdan. The latter was not a member of the board, but since he had been secretary of the board of the private school, he was continued in that post. Samuel D. Lockwood was elected president, and the members drew lots for two and four year terms; Dunlap and Hunt drew the former, and Lockwood, Happy, and Rockwell the latter. Among the first acts of the board was the distribution of a circular telling about the new institution. After a brief history of the private school, and an announcement that there would be no charge for board or tuition, applications were invited on behalf of the blind persons over ten years of age. No mention was



made of an upper age limit. The school was to open on April 1, 1849.

So that the school could be opened as promised, the board rented a large house for \$225 a year. It was located on "The Mound" in the far western part of Jacksonville. The structure, called "The Mansion," belonged to trustee James Dunlap. As a temporary home, the Dunlap Mansion was reasonably satisfactory so long as the number of pupils was small. But since a new building was not ready for occupancy until 1854, and its capacity of twenty-one was reached in 1852, pupils were turned away.

The board employed Samuel Bacon as principal at a salary of \$600 a year plus board and lodging. Mrs. Sarah Graves was continued as matron and housekeeper, and her salary was set at \$200 a year with board and lodging for herself and her family. Her staff consisted of an "errand boy," and such maids, "washer women," and other domestic help as needed. In some of these arrangements there was a personal involvement by some of the members of the board of trustees that seems to be what is known in the twentieth century as "conflict of interest." For example, The Mansion was the property of Col. James Dunlap. William Happy was the son-in-law of Mrs. Sarah Graves; Bacon also married a daughter of Mrs. Graves, and therefore he and Happy were brothers-in-law. Happy also sold the institution a horse and a milk cow, and the hay with which to feed them. Dennis Rockwell sold the institution a three-seated wagon. But neither the men nor their associates saw anything wrong about these transactions. It was simply a matter of convenience; the institution needed these things, the trustees had them available, and they did not charge any more than any one else; in no sense was there any fraud. In the case of Mrs. Graves, there is nothing to indicate that she was not a competent person for the job. In time, however, the legislature did provide that the boards of all the institutions must have a majority of members from outside Jacksonville, and eventually state supervisory bodies were created to oversee the institutions.

The teaching staff consisted of Bacon, who taught all academic subjects and instructed in handicrafts; Aaron Rose, assistant teacher and instructor of music at a salary of \$350 a year and board; and, after July 1, 1849, Miss Lavinia Booth, a former pupil at the Ohio school, was instructor of handicrafts to the female pupils.

The first few pupils were admitted, and the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind officially opened on April 7, 1849. By July 2, there were fourteen young people in attendance. Because so many pupils had come from as far as two hundred miles away in wagons or other horse-drawn vehicles, it was decided to have no

vacation in 1849, and the school continued in session until July 10, 1850.

The Mansion, in which the school was housed, was a three-storied structure, with parlor, dining room, and schoolroom on the first floor and sleeping rooms on the second floor and in the "garrett." It is not known where the kitchen was located, but possibly it was in the cellar, and food was raised to the dining room by a "dumb waiter." There was also a back porch, and at the rear of the property was a smoke house, a carriage house, and a privy. The house was heated by fireplaces in the bedrooms, and stoves in the dining room, schoolroom, and kitchen. Wood was the fuel used in both, and on one occasion Colonel Dunlap furnished sixty cords for \$2.25 a cord. The rooms were lighted with candles and lard lamps.

During the years 1849 and 1850, equipment was added so that an inventory taken on July 10, 1850, showed that the schoolroom contained desks, tables, and stools for twenty-one pupils; two maps in large frames and a map on rollers; four leaden slates, three alphabets, probably cut-out wooden letters; four "blind child's books," probably in raised print; four volumes of the Bible, also in raised print; five primary readers and five arithmetic books, probably in ink print. There were also music books and sheet music, and the following instruments, one each: piano, melodeon, bass viol, guitar, cello, clarinet, and alto horn; two French horns, two flutes, and two violins. The other rooms were adequately equipped with the necessary furniture. A cow was pastured nearby the house, and a horse was kept in the carriage house and was used to draw a three-seated wagon.

As we have said, Bacon taught reading and writing, geography, and arithmetic. Bacon followed the practice of the Ohio Institution for the Blind, and gave most of the instruction by word of mouth. Bacon, Miss Sarah Graves, and Miss Booth all spent much time in reading to the pupils, because the material they could read for themselves was meager. A principal source in raised print was selections from the New Testament, and Bacon purchased these and other such special material from either the Kentucky or Ohio schools where he had gone early in 1849. In turn these institutions had secured the material from either the Philadelphia or Boston schools, since they were the only places where type and printing presses were available for producing embossed books.

As Bacon taught the academic subjects, so did young Aaron Rose proceed with musical instruction. It was a long-held popular belief that somehow all blind people were gifted musicians. Although teachers of the blind recognized that this was not true, they strongly

supported musical training partly for the personal satisfaction that many young people received, and partly because to those that did have talent, it offered vocational opportunities. Instruction in music at this period was largely given orally, and to a degree pupils learned scales, keys, and general music theory. They were taught to perform on musical instruments by dictating to them the notes that were to be played. Not until a musical notation was worked out in braille was there a really satisfactory system whereby pupils could themselves read or study from scores. Before the development of braille, some effort was made to reproduce sheet music in raised letters. This, as we shall see, had all the disadvantages that were attached to all embossed characters except raised dots.

The third branch of the curricula of all schools for the blind was handicraft or mechanical training. As we know, Samuel Bacon was competent, even expert, in this field, and within a few months he had purchased the tools and materials with which to teach brush and broom making to the boys, and knitting, sewing, and beadwork to the girls.

The fourth division of the curricula of modern schools, physical education, was not taught formally anywhere in the 1840's and 1850's, but pupils were encouraged to move about, perform household chores, and to take walks for exercise.

While Bacon and his assistants were hard at work with all these matters, the trustees were planning for the future. The legislature had authorized them to purchase land and erect a suitable building. After some inquiry and discussion with other Jacksonville people, a site was selected on the east side of town, about half a mile from the public square, and at the very edge of the town's boundary. There was no mention of it in the minutes of the board, but the location in the east part of town must certainly have taken into account the fact that the school for the deaf was in the west, and the Asylum for the Insane was in the south part of town.

The plot purchased was slightly less than twenty-two and a half acres between State Street and the railroad to the north. The owner was the widow of Col. John J. Hardin, a prominent Jacksonville lawyer who lost his life in the Mexican War. Purchased for \$75 an acre, the cost was \$1,683.75, paid in two annual installments.

As soon as it was agreed that the Hardin property would be purchased, the board employed a Jacksonville man, Napoleon Koscialowski, variously described as engineer or architect, to design a building. On July 9, 1849, Koscialowski presented drawings and specifications, and on August 9, after failing in efforts to cooperate with the school for the deaf in employing the same architects and



contractors for their respective institutions, the board of the institution for the blind advertised for bids for excavating a cellar and putting in a foundation. Since the return from the 1/10 mill tax provided only for an income of \$5,000 or \$6,000 a year, and from this the operating expenses of the school in The Mansion had to be paid, there was left only \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year available for building purposes. The board also decided to be its own general contractor, and negotiated contracts for material and labor for various parts of the structure; Koscialowski was employed to supervise the quality of materials and labor. As noted above, the money from the state treasurer came in irregularly. At one point it was necessary to borrow \$1,000 from the Asylum for the Insane until a warrant could be received, and when it was sold, it brought less than face value.

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While the board of trustees was engrossed in its building and financial matters, it was faced with problems concerning the school in The Mansion. After sixty-six weeks of continuous session, Bacon was physically exhausted and, following his recommendation, the board closed the school on July 10, 1850, for a summer vacation. Through May and June the board wrestled with the reemployment of Bacon, Rose, Miss Booth, and Mrs. Graves. Bacon felt that he should receive an increase in his salary from \$600 to \$800 a year. Aaron Rose, the music teacher, and Lavinia Booth, the handicraft instructor, also asked for salary increases. The board offered Rose an increase of \$50 and guaranteed him future annual increases until his salary would be \$500. Bacon was allowed a \$100 increase, but no agreement was reached on what to pay Miss Booth. The board would go no further in meeting the requests of the staff members, and all of them signed a single letter of resignation. Then Bacon had second thoughts, feeling that the future of the school would be seriously hurt if the staff had to be changed. He therefore persuaded Rose and Miss Booth to stay on without receiving any salary increases. Mrs. Graves decided that she would give up her post.

The upshot of the matter was that the board agreed to reemploy Rose, consider further the case of Miss Booth, and reject Bacon's offer to stay on. Most historical accounts of this incident note simply that Bacon was dismissed over a salary dispute, but a closer examination reveals that there were personal conflicts among the members of the board, and a genuine dissatisfaction with Bacon's management of the school. On the first matter Bacon said that there was a quarrel between James Dunlap and W. W. Happy over the



affairs of the Asylum for the Insane where both were members of the board of trustees. Bacon and Happy were associated because they both married daughters of Mrs. Sarah Graves, and Bacon said that Dunlap "sought to annoy Happy," through him. Rockwell sided with Dunlap, said Bacon, because if he were dismissed, Rockwell was promised a trip to Washington, D. C. in connection with interviewing candidates for Bacon's job. Bacon went on to say that the chairman of the board, Samuel Lockwood, while he was a good man, yet he was "easily bulldozed." Finally Bacon insisted that James Berdan, the secretary of the board, supported Dunlap and Rockwell out of personal antipathy toward him. Bacon felt that the "animosity" of Berdan was illustrated when the board accepted the latter's recommendation that the principal not be paid his last quarter's salary because he had resigned before he had fulfilled his contract.

Against Sam Bacon's explanation of why he was forced to leave the Jacksonville institution, is a statement by the board of trustees that Dennis Rockwell was to visit institutions for the blind in the East "for the purpose of collecting information for the use of the board, (and) that he be authorized to procure such books, instruments, and apparatus as may be needful for the use of the school, and also to engage a competent superintendent who shall be a *seeing man and experienced in the conduct of a school. . .*" (Italics are those of the author.)

This statement indicated that Bacon had not had enough experience, and that being blind, and dependent on the eyes of others, many matters were overlooked and the kind of management that was necessary could not be provided. It is a fact that very few supervising officers of schools for the blind have themselves been blind, and whether it was an absolute requirement or not, all of the superintendents of the Illinois institution after Bacon have been sighted men.

Under the circumstances of what amounted to a dismissal, it is not surprising that forty-three years later, Bacon was still somewhat bitter and resentful about the whole affair. He felt that all his hard work and devotion to the cause of a school for the blind in Jacksonville was unrewarded, and the board was quite unfair toward him, and implied that he was not competent and entitled to a proper salary. Yet the board gave Bacon's successor the same amount that Bacon had asked for. Bacon also said that "the Illinois Institution for the Blind has always occupied a low position in the estimation of educators of the blind, while the [School for the] Deaf has held a high position. Why is this? Simply because the board for

the School for the Deaf has always selected young men for the head of that school. I have never known a man to succeed in teaching the blind who commenced after he was 30 years of age." This statement is merely Bacon's personal opinion, because the literature on schools for the blind does not bear it out. While there was this resentment on the part of Bacon, yet he was inclined to forgive everyone but James Berdan, and he said, "I think there is no place like Illinois. I love the state, and I admire the people who were so kind to me when I was a young man."

Samuel Bacon continued to be a leader of education for the blind. Four years after he left the Jacksonville school, he founded a state-supported school for the blind in Vinton, Iowa, and remained there as superintendent for twenty years. In 1873 he moved to Nebraska City, Nebraska, and in 1876 he founded another state school. Here he stayed until 1887, when he retired. In both Iowa and Nebraska he was successful in his conduct of the schools, acquired considerable property in land, and his years of retirement were spent comfortably on a farm in Nebraska. The Illinois school has always paid him honor. He visited the school in 1909 for the sixtieth anniversary, and in 1924 a marble plaque was placed in the entrance hall of the main building.

## Chapter Two

# Putting Down Roots, 1850-1874

The board of trustees started the Institution for the Education of the Blind on a new tack when it employed Joshua Rhoads. During the sixty-six weeks of Bacon's superintendency, the members of the board were uneasy about the way things were going in the school. True, they were men of affairs, and were fully capable of managing the business of the enterprise, but they had little information about the details of teaching, other than was given them by Bacon, whose knowledge of the subject was limited to a short experience as a teacher at the Ohio school. The trustees felt it necessary that they have a trained man, one who was not blind, and one to whom they could, with confidence, leave the details of teaching, the determination of the curriculum, and the day-to-day operation of the school.

For these reasons the board sent Dennis Rockwell East to find a suitable superintendent. As we reflect on this action, it does seem that President Lockwood and his fellow trustees placed a great responsibility on their representative. Not only did he have the duty of finding a man, but he was empowered to employ him. But certainly the trustees had discussed the matter exhaustively, and Rockwell knew what was required of him. Perhaps the board did not send a delegation or committee to the East because travel was difficult and expensive, and considering the somewhat straitened condition of the school's treasury, they did the best they could.

We do not have the details of Rockwell's search for the superintendent. We know only that he visited Philadelphia. Possibly he went to Washington, D. C., but for this we have only Bacon's statement. Whether or not he made inquiries elsewhere than in Philadelphia, he was satisfied that he had found the right man when he engaged Dr. Joshua Rhoads, a man of forty-four years, who had experience as a physician, as a teacher of both sighted and blind children, and as an executive in educational institutions.

Joshua Rhoads was born September 6, 1806, into a Quaker family of Philadelphia. His mother was said to be a follower of Elias Hicks, a radical Quaker, but his father was more orthodox, and Joshua himself remained a member of the Society of Friends all of his life. His parents were seemingly well-off, because they sent their son first to West Town School in Philadelphia, and later to Gummere's Boarding School in Burlington, New Jersey. A boyhood friend remembered that Joshua was a person of "virtuous principles, kind

affection, and of well-informed and disciplined mind." From boarding school he went to the University of Pennsylvania and at the same time studied with a practicing Philadelphia physician, Dr. Joseph Parrish. Rhoads received his M. D. degree in 1828 from the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, and later was awarded an honorary Master of Arts degree by Princeton University. Dr. Parrish said that his pupil was "diligent" as a student, and possessed "excellent talents." For ten years Joshua practiced medicine successfully in Philadelphia, but in 1838 he left the profession because the hard work affected his health. He went into the field of education, accepting an appointment as teacher and assistant to the principal of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind. He and his wife, Rosanna, and their children went to live in the school, and Mrs. Rhoads served as matron. Dr. Rhoads was "to aid the Principal in the performance of his several duties, and in his absence to represent him."

The principal whom Rhoads was to assist was Julius A. Friedlander, one of the pioneers in the education of the blind in the United States. Friedlander was born in Germany in 1803 and came to the United States in 1832. A graduate of the University of Leipzig, he early became interested in the education of the blind, and visited institutions in Europe to familiarize himself with the methods used for instruction. Rather than seek a career in Europe, he came to Philadelphia in 1832 because he had heard about the benevolent and educational activities carried on by the people of the Quaker city. He did find persons interested in what he had to tell them about the education of the blind, but he also found that not much was known about the subject. Consequently, at his own expense, he opened a demonstration school, much as Bacon did in Jacksonville. Following a pattern familiar to us, Friedlander first obtained private support, and when the feasibility of teaching the blind was shown, the state provided additional funds. By 1834 the school was well-established, and in 1837 a substantial building was occupied.

One of the reasons Rhoads was employed was that Friedlander's health was not good, and he had already been forced to take a year's leave of absence. When Friedlander returned to duty Dr. Rhoads was engaged. It is doubtful that Friedlander had much direct effect on Rhoads, because, considering his illness, he could not have been around very much. But Rhoads did absorb the system that Friedlander had instituted, and there were other sources of information to which Rhoads could turn. Friedlander himself had written a pamphlet, *Observations on the Means Employed in the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind*. Rhoads also read articles



and brochures that had appeared in Europe, and the reports and pamphlets by Samuel G. Howe of Boston and John D. Russ of New York, who, with Friedlander, were the pioneer teachers of the blind in the United States.

Julius Friedlander died on March 17, 1839, and Dr. Rhoads with one year's experience, was appointed by the board of managers to take over the superintendency. He held the office for two more years and then resigned. The separation was amicable, and the members of the board of managers tendered "their kind regard and their best wishes for his success in the honorable career upon which he has entered." While there is no other evidence than this, it is probable that the "honorable career" was a return to the teaching of sighted children, because in the years 1842-1850, Dr. Rhoads was, at different times, the principal of the Kensington Grammar School and the Friends Central School, one of which (the record is not clear) had an enrollment of 300 boys.

Dennis Rockwell succeeded in getting Rhoads to become head of the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind, and in the late summer of 1850, the Quaker educator, Rosanna, and their four young daughters (one died soon after arriving in Jacksonville) moved west. It took courage for them to leave the city of Philadelphia where their families had been settled since the 1680's and go to the little Illinois town. We may only speculate about the reasons that impelled Joshua and Rosanna to make the move. Perhaps it was a strong Quaker sense of responsibility to do good and help the unfortunate people of the world. The blind of Illinois needed someone to care for them, and Joshua and Rosanna knew how to do it. In Dr. Rhoads' first official report we find something of this call to duty. "On presenting this report, I do not conceive it to be necessary to enter into a detail of the arguments in favor of establishments for the relief of suffering humanity. The exertions of the philanthropic of the nation, blessed by the Almighty Giver of every good, have so far enlightened public opinion, that to enter into any argument in reference to their value and importance would be to insult it. . . . When we view these institutions erected at so much cost, and so sedulously protected; [and] reflect that they arose from a spontaneous burst of public feeling, we must feel an assurance that the entire population have learned to 'feel another's woe,' and to endeavor to alleviate it."

At a later point, speaking about the blind learning to read the Bible, he said, "The benevolent heart of the Christian must thrill with delight, when he beholds the blind enjoying, in their solitude and physical darkness, an intimate communion with the inspired

penmen, and felt itself [sic.] repaid for all the labor, time, and attention bestowed."

When the Rhoads family arrived in Jacksonville, they took up quarters in The Mansion and prepared to get things ready for the twenty-three pupils, new and old, who would come on October 10, 1850. With the approval of the board, Dr. and Mrs. Rhoads sent to Philadelphia to get servants to staff the school. It is not clear why this was done, but it may be that they did not want to become involved with the local people as the Bacons and Mrs. Graves had, or it may be that there just were not trained persons available in Jacksonville.

The Mansion was very crowded, and Dr. Rhoads and the trustees made every effort to push ahead the work on the new buildings; but progress was slow, and Dr. Rhoads had to do the best he could with the limited facilities of The Mansion. The Quaker doctor was a kind man, but he was strict about requiring that order be maintained, and necessary rules upheld. One set of rules, undated, but probably instituted soon after the doctor took charge, was as follows:

1. On Sunday mornings when the weather is suitable, the pupils shall attend some church.
2. There shall be no intercourse between male and female pupils.
3. On the ringing of the bell, the pupils shall at once proceed to their appropriate occupations.
4. When the pupils do not rise for morning prayer, they will not go to breakfast.

Note: The male pupils are encouraged to roam at large in town or during recess. The female pupils [may] ask the matron for leave of absence, which is seldom refused.

The daily schedule left little time for idleness:

Rise, 6 o'clock

Prayers and Bible Reading, 6:45

Breakfast, 7

Literature and music, 8-12, with half-hour intermission

Dinner and recess, 12-2

Literature and music, 2-6

Supper and recess, 6-7

History, 7-8

Retire, 9:30

Dr. Rhoads could not at once introduce a full curriculum such as that which prevailed at the Pennsylvania institution, but he did

approach it as nearly as possible. In his first report he said that the curriculum of the Illinois school was similar to that in other American institutions, and, like the curricula of all of them, it was more "liberal" than that of European schools. In the latter schools there was more emphasis on teaching trades than there was on teaching "literary subjects." There was even emphasis on maintaining shops in which pupils worked and sold the products as a means of self-support. In the United States instruction included literature, music, and trades or handicrafts, but the latter were "pursued with a view to the future advantage of the pupils rather than to any present profit from their labor." Rhoads said that there were many trades which the blind could learn, but that the most suitable were those that required but small capital for the purchase of materials and tools. One of these trades was started when Rhoads took three pupils who had little talent for music, and in the time which other pupils devoted to the latter, Rhoads taught them brush making. Female pupils did learn sewing, knitting, and bead work, but this was engaged in only one hour of the day by those who did not practice with the orchestra.

For "literature studies," the pupils were supplied with the necessary slates, books, and maps, and they learned to read and write. In addition to literature itself, they also learned something about grammar, geography, political economy, natural philosophy (science), and arithmetic, although there was little material available for pupils to read for themselves. As we have noted, the principal source was the books of the gospels from the New Testament. They had first been printed at the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind. The method of printing, contrived by Jacob Snider, Jr., the recording secretary of the board of managers, employed specially shaped letters embossed on copper plates by hand, and then impressed on soft paper. Besides the New Testament gospels there were some other reading materials that had been purchased by Bacon, and as we shall see, Rhoads acquired much more later. Rhoads reported that all of his pupils knew the letters of the alphabet, and all but two read the "inspired work with pleasure and profit." Although Rhoads does not say so, instruction must have been much like that in a one-room school; certainly a great part of his teaching was done individually and in small groups, because he had pupils of varying ages and degrees of advancement in his class.

Rhoads put more emphasis on teaching students to read for themselves, and depended less on oral instruction, thus bringing the Illinois school into the mainstream of education for the blind. He had also learned at the Pennsylvania school about the use of special



blocks, pegboards, and number slates in teaching arithmetic, and alphabet blocks for spelling words. There was also a set of styli, each with a letter outlined in pointed dots, that the pupils used to make embossed letters on soft papers. For geography Rhoads himself prepared maps with raised outlines and elevated symbols for political and physical features.

The third branch of instruction, music, was taught by Aaron Rose. While Rhoads understood that no blind person had special talents for music just because he was blind, he did believe "that the blind enjoy the harmony of sounds and appeal to it, instinctively, for gratification," and that it was a "relief from ennui." Rhoads cited a report of the New York Institute for the Blind that music is the peculiar province of the blind. "Sound is to them what light is to the seeing. It presents to the mind a world in which beauty and deformity, joy and sorrow, grace and proportion, make impressions as vivid, and excite emotion, as intense, as are produced in the minds of the seeing by the presentation of the real and palpable objects calculated to waken such ideas and feelings." Rhoads recognized that there was only the same proportion among the blind as among the seeing that was "fitted by nature to excel," but that the deprivation of sight "enabled the blind to bestow more time, labor and attention upon the cultivation of the talent for music." But Rhoads felt that music, although it was "a solace and source of happiness to many," it was a means of livelihood to but few.

In the above remarks, Rhoads brought together all the arguments for the prominence of music in the curriculum of the Illinois school and in other schools of the nation until quite recent times. Many of the reasons given by Rhoads were mere assumptions, and the fallacies in them did not become apparent until the twentieth century brought psychological insights into the education of the blind.

Another matter to which Dr. Rhoads gave attention was that of finding blind persons in Illinois who would profit from attendance at the school, although The Mansion was full and the only admissions possible were to fill vacancies. In a "Notice to Applicants" appended to the biennial reports, Rhoads declared that the school gave a "good English education and musical instruction," and that later "classical literature" and useful arts and trades would be offered. Only persons of good health and "sufficient mental capacity" would be admitted. The age of admission was a subject of discussion among educators of the blind. Rhoads felt that ten to twelve was a proper age, because until then it was better for a child to remain with its parents. It was not until a child was at least ten years old that he could begin to learn a trade, and this was the chief reason why he



should come to the school, aside from the mental and physical stimulation he would receive. While some schools had an upper age limit of twenty-one years, Rhoads said that he believed in a "liberal policy" and that there were pupils in the school up to the age of thirty. Several of these older pupils, he said, "progressed rapidly and were good examples and aided in keeping order among the juniors." The doctor insisted that it was not possible to establish absolute age limits. It is sometimes forgotten that older adolescents and adults were at the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind until the early twentieth century. As we shall see, the presence of mature men and women created problems for superintendents and boards of trustees until the workshop and industrial training aspect of the program was eliminated. Rhoads himself had a particularly bad experience with the adults among his pupils, and as a result no student was allowed to stay longer than five years without the special permission of the board of trustees.

Rhoads, like Bacon and early superintendents of other institutions, felt that it was necessary to continue to give exhibitions of the results of the education of the blind, not so much to arouse general public interest as to influence parents and friends to enroll their children and acquaintances in the school. In 1851, an excursion to Springfield was undertaken with eighteen students, accompanied by board member Dennis Rockwell, Dr. and Mrs. Rhoads, and two of their daughters. Three performances were given on February 6, 7, and 8. The exhibition not only advertised the school, but since an admission was charged, a profit of \$48 was made, which was used for the purchase of musical instruments.

In his reports, Rhoads urged that representatives of the school visit in the homes of blind children, first, to tell parents the advantage of sending their children to the Jacksonville school, and second, to instruct parents and others in the care of children during the period before they could be sent to the school. (There is no evidence that such visitations were made.) Dr. Rhoads and all other educators of the blind deplored the over-protectiveness of parents, and declared that blind children should be encouraged to move about, to dress themselves, and do as much else as they could. Parents were advised not to be concerned if their blind children got a few bumps and scratches during the free exploration of their environment.

Another problem was what degree of blindness was permissible for admission. Rhoads pointed out that many European institutions admitted no one who could distinguish between light and dark, but that institutions in the United States set the standard at the inability to read ordinary print, or to be taught by the methods used in schools

for the sighted. It was not for some years that educators began to discuss the inadvisability of mixing the totally blind with the partially sighted. Dr. Rhoads' position was that it was only charitable to provide for persons of all degrees of blindness.

Applicants for admission were also asked to give the cause of their blindness, and, when they were accepted, this was made a part of their record, and was published in the biennial reports. No oculist or ophthalmologist was employed to examine the pupils, and if attention was paid to the eyes, it was done by the attending physician. But it does seem that the latter was concerned mostly with the general health of the pupils. This may be because it was assumed that since pupils were older when they came to school, all that was possible had been done to relieve their blindness.

In Chicago, in 1858, the Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary was founded. Possibly it served the blind in northern Illinois, but generally ophthalmology as a medical specialty made little progress in the rest of the state before about 1890. It is, therefore, not surprising that Rhoads and his immediate successors were not concerned about the causes and prevention of blindness. Other schools, notably that of Ohio, employed oculists, and, as in the case of Lavinia Booth, even performed successful operations. It was not until the last decade of the nineteenth century that an ophthalmologist was employed by the Illinois school.

Typical of the information about the causes of the blindness of the pupils admitted to the school is this list from the report of 1855:

Accident .....	7
Amaurosis (from some other causes than lesions of the eye or optic nerve, and no visible change in the organ itself) .....	2
Cataract .....	1
Congenital (many cases called congenital were the result of <i>ophthalmia neonatorum</i> , often called "babies sore eyes," and the result of infection in the birth canal) .....	19
Inflammation (caused by infection, usually later in childhood) .	12
Fever (scarlet fever and measles) .....	6
Scrofula (inflammation due to tubercular condition) .....	1

On the matter of the cost to parents or guardians of sending persons to school, Dr. Rhoads rejoiced that Illinois had opened its institution to all, regardless of financial or social status. The state would bear all the expenses of pupils, except clothes and travel;

there would be no pauper test as in some European countries. For those whose families or friends could not pay the small amount of money required, an appeal could be made to the local county, and it was seldom denied.

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These were the conditions under which Dr. Rhoads organized and conducted the school during the years it was housed in The Mansion, and with changes and additions to be noted later, they prevailed until 1874, when he retired from office. The make-shift facilities of The Mansion precluded any expansion or additions to the curriculum. Even the purchase of books and apparatus was kept to a minimum. Rhoads and the pupils alike looked forward to the time when they could settle down in less crowded and more convenient surroundings.

The long delay in completing the construction of the new building at the permanent site on East State Street was caused at first by insufficient revenue from the 1/10 mill tax, and later by the failure of the first superintendent of construction, Napoleon Koscialowski, to insist on competent work, and possibly also because of his inexperienced design. We remember that the board of trustees had promptly acquired a plot of land, and had employed Koscialowski to draw plans and supervise construction. Because of lack of funds, in 1850 only the cellar was dug and the foundation of stone was laid, and the board directed that it be covered until construction could be resumed. In November and December, 1850, contracts were let for 600,000 bricks and the necessary lumber, window frames, and other materials. In the spring of 1851, construction was resumed, again under the direction of Koscialowski. But dissatisfaction with the architect-engineer's services developed because of the unsoundness of the design and the poor quality of the construction of the roof. On October 8, 1851, another superintendent, William Gass, was employed and directed to go to St. Louis "to consult a practical architect on the subject of the plan for constructing the roof of the present building as he deems best." Meanwhile the bricklaying was suspended, Koscialowski was discharged, and he was directed to turn in plans and estimates, and present a bill for his services.

Gass recommended that John Johnson, the St. Louis architect, be retained to draw new plans. The board also paid him \$6 a day and expenses to come to Jacksonville and oversee the construction, although Gass was continued as the superintendent. By the end of 1852, the building was under roof, and Mr. Gass was sent to Indi-



anapolis, where a new building was under construction, to pick up pointers for finishing and equipping the Jacksonville structure. The interior work—plastering, painting, and so on—continued through the rest of the year 1852, and the grounds were graded, cisterns dug, and auxiliary structures—wash house, bakery, workshops, and two privies—were constructed.

Gass was authorized to have desks built, and Rhoads, on a trip East in 1853 to attend a meeting of superintendents of schools for the blind, stopped in Philadelphia to procure other equipment. He purchased two pianos, a melodeon, eight maps, a globe, instructional equipment for science and arithmetic, a loom, and materials and tools for brush and broom making. The interior of the building was nearly finished by December, 1854. Although it was not completely furnished, pupils, teachers, and the Rhoads family moved in. Finally all the workmen left, and the school was in full possession for the term of 1855-1856.

The new building was 166 by 66 feet, four full stories high with a fifth floor or garrett above. It was of brick, trimmed with stone, and heated by four hot air furnaces in the cellar. Space was provided for Dr. Rhoads and his family, several teachers, and fifty pupils, although eventually the enrollment reached seventy. The school-rooms, parlors, dining room, and chapel were on the first floor, the kitchen on the lower floor, and on the upper floors were sleeping and living rooms. Shop work by the boys and men was done in a separate building. A barn in which horses were stabled and carriages and wagons kept, was nearby. The grounds provided space for gardens, an orchard, and a pasture for the cows. On the north, east, and west osage orange hedges were planted, and on the side facing East State Street, there was a neat wrought iron fence.

There was an air of modest elegance about the building, because of the stained glass transom over the main door, the carpeted parlors, and the balustered stairways. The soft-pink brick building, with its white accents, was well-proportioned and exhibited equal balance of tall windows on each side of the entrance. The unornamented cornice and entablature rested on four wooden pilasters with Corinthian capitals, and over the fourth floor windows, connecting the pilasters, were white arches. Atop the front facade was a simple pediment, with a small round window in its center. From an architectural standpoint, this really handsome building was a mixture of orders and periods that might overall be described as Prairie Classical, or, in American terms, Prairie Federalist!

When Dr. Rhoads went to New York to attend the first convention of American instructors of the blind, the main purpose of the meet-



ing was to appeal to Congress for a permanent printing fund for the blind, but there was also an opportunity for the superintendents of the state institutions to exchange views and policies concerning the operation of their schools. For Joshua Rhoads and the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind, the meeting was also important because it brought the superintendent and the school in touch with the course of education in the United States and in Europe.

The drive to get Congress to provide financially for the printing of books for the blind eventually resulted in federal support for the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, Kentucky, an agency which still supplies books to the blind. Rhoads, drawing on the information he had gotten in New York, discussed the question of the type in which such books should be printed, and reported that the convention had agreed to adopt as standard the form of Roman lower case type developed by Samuel G. Howe at the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind. Howe had carefully studied the type situation in Europe, where there were five different faces used, before he had settled on that which was called Boston Line Letter. Even in this country, the press of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction for the Blind used its own type face in its edition of parts of the New Testament. But it was the press of the Massachusetts school that produced most of the books used in the United States. Rhoads was in full accord with the decision of the convention of instructors, and he placed a large order of books with the Massachusetts school in 1855. When these arrived he said that the library of the Illinois school had at least one copy of every book printed for the blind. The literature department was further strengthened by the purchase in 1859 of a variety of ink printed books for the use of the teachers in getting material to talk to their classes about, or for reading to the pupils. Among these books were the works of Homer and Virgil; the English writers Milton, Cowper, Burns and Buckle; the American poets Whittier, Longfellow, and Holmes; several copies of the Bible, and textbooks on geography, science, and history; one copy each of *The Magician's Own Book*, *The Sociable*, and *Parlor Charades*, no doubt used to provide sources of entertainment during recreation periods. In later years Rhoads spent \$200 to \$600 annually for books, maps, and teaching materials.

In other ways the literary program was expanded; the number of pupils increased; a rough graded system was provided by dividing the classes into elementary, intermediate, and advanced, thus making it possible for some pupils to spend more time on subjects other than reading, writing, and elementary arithmetic. Through

the 1860's and 1870's there were from two to four teachers, including Dr. Rhoads in the literary department. Among the teachers were a Mr. Dunham and his wife, John D. Strong, John A. Loomis, William A. King, James Black, and Charles Greenleaf. The man who contributed most to the department was John Loomis, who came in 1861 as a teacher of literature. He continued to teach until 1881, as well as being an assistant to Dr. Rhoads and the latter's successor. Sometimes Loomis represented the school at meetings of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind. Frank H. Hall wrote, "There is evidence that the pupils became very strongly attached to Professor Loomis, and although the methods of instruction employed might not in some particulars, meet the approval of modern teachers, there is abundant proof that the value of his instruction and influence cannot be measured by the standards of worth that are usually applied to human effort."

Dr. Rhoads' daughter, Alice, was employed in the literary department, taking as her special field the instruction of beginning students.

Under Rhoads' management, the music department was maintained as a coequal with the literary and mechanical departments. Rhoads himself was interested in music, partly because his daughter Alice was a competent violinist, sometimes appearing on musical programs at the school. On occasion she directed the school orchestra, as well as being active in the musical life of the town. When Dr. Rhoads, with the encouragement of the trustees, took students to Springfield for an exhibition and concert they appeared in the House of Representatives, and a newspaper reporter said that the group sang "a beautiful song of 'Welcome,' written by one of the pupils and set to music by another. Then followed the reading of books printed for the use of the blind, and other interesting performances. The proceedings were regarded with deep interest by an immense concourse of spectators. The citizens of the State will never regret what they have done for this unfortunate class of people."

A wholly musical concert was presented a night or two later in the Second Presbyterian Church, for which there was an admission charge. A similar exhibition and concert to that given in the House of Representatives chamber was presented in five of the larger cities of the state in 1855. An elaborate musical program was given in Chicago in 1859; twenty young people gave concerts in Metropolitan Hall on November 28, 29, 30, at which an admission charge was made. Each concert was different, and was made up of short pieces. It was a concert such as was given by sighted persons, both professional and amateur. Here is the program for the first evening.

1. Overture, *La Dame Blanche*.....Boieldieu
2. Kyrie of the Twelfth Mass.....Mozart
3. Red Rover (song).....Linley
4. Grand Variations for Piano.....Herz
5. Greetings (vocal duet).....Mendelssohn
6. "Joy, Joy, Freedom to Do," from opera,  
Gypsy's Warning.....Benedict
7. Cerrito Polka (orchestra).....Lanier
8. Theme and Variations (flute solo).....Strachauer
9. "As I View the Scene so Charming," (grand aria  
from *Somnambula*)
10. "The Heavens are Telling," from *The Creation*.....Haydn
11. "Most Beautiful Appear," from *The Creation*.....Haydn
12. Valse Ver (orchestra)

After 1859 there were no more out-of-town concerts or exhibitions because the school building was well filled with pupils, and Rhoads felt that there were few blind who would profit by coming to the school that did not know about it.

At the same time there were frequent occasions in Jacksonville when programs of music were given. In 1863, for example, the Presbyterian Church was rented for a performance. In 1867 and 1868, when the "Editorial Convention" was held in the city the editors of Illinois newspapers were entertained at the state institutions, and at the school for the blind an exhibition of class work and a concert were presented. It was quite important that the school make a good impression on the editors, because they published accounts of their visit in their home town newspapers. Equally important to the superintendent and the trustees was the impression made on the state legislators when they visited Jacksonville in 1865 and 1867. Other programs were given at the end of the school year, when an exhibition of class work was presented to the board of trustees, parents of pupils, and other visitors, just as was done in all schools in the nineteenth century. Musical performances were always a prominent part of these events.

The concern of Rhoads and the trustees for the music curriculum is also evident in the comparatively large salaries paid to music teachers. In 1853 a second music teacher, Joseph Ramsey, was employed at a salary of \$500. When Aaron Rose died, Ramsey's salary was raised to \$700, and in 1859, a new teacher received \$800 and was given permission to teach an hour a day in town. At this time Rhoads' own salary was only \$1,000. In 1868, Professor A. E. Wimmerstadt was appointed to teach music. He was a distinguished



Swedish composer and concert performer on piano and organ, who had a fine reputation in the Middle West. Wimmerstadt divided his time between Illinois Female College (now MacMurray College), and the school for the blind, and from the latter he received \$800 a year.

Still another indication of the importance attached to the music department was the considerable amount of money expended for musical instruments. There were sufficient strings and other instruments to equip an orchestra of twenty or thirty players, although presumably some pupils provided their own instruments. The treasurer's reports from 1851 to 1874 show that \$200 to \$300 a year was spent for instruments and music. In addition, two pianos were purchased for \$250 each, a melodeon for \$60, and a pipe organ, made in St. Louis, for \$1,600.

Music retained its significant place at the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind throughout the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth. So long as there were young adults, with many years of playing experience, quite advanced music was performed. With the lower age average of the last third of the twentieth century, music still retained a significant place in the life of the school, but the music department did not have the air of a conservatory that was characteristic of the Rhoads administration and those that succeeded him in the nineteenth century.



One of the persistent problems in schools for the blind in the nineteenth century was what was called "discipline." Almost every session of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind included a long discussion of this troublesome subject. The very fact that young men and women of teen age and older were brought together under the intimate conditions of a residential school created a situation in which it was difficult for prevailing standards of morality to be upheld. Young blind people suffered the same urges, and faced the same conflict with authority, as did adolescents who could see, and teachers of the blind had constantly to remind themselves of this fact. After all, they said, the blind were doomed to live a difficult life in a world where everyone else could see, and somehow it was not just that they should be punished, and thus add to their woe. But what should be done with the young person who did not get to class on time, was disrespectful to his elders, refused to keep his face washed, and did equally heinous antisocial things? Educators were generally agreed that physical punishment would not do, and



they were left with only the stick of deprivation of privileges. Most teachers took such matters calmly as being a normal part of their teaching, and little more than temporary resentment was felt by their students.

For Dr. Rhoads, however, infraction of rules was serious because the good order of the institution was threatened. Any disruption interfered with the main purpose of educating the blind so that they could live a fuller and happier life. We have noted the rules that Rhoads laid down; it was a short list, but it was necessary that every one be obeyed. Dr. Rhoads was a man of great charity and kindness, but he was also inflexible in maintaining his rules. His close associate and assistant, John Loomis, said of him, "Force of character was a leading characteristic. He organized, arranged, and subordinated every pupil to authority. To obey was the first law. It was the first lesson. It was paramount to all others. Having secured obedience, application to duties was enforced. Progress in studies was the result, culture was the remote object of his discipline."

It is not surprising, therefore, that there were instances of rebellion and disruption. Rhoads said that from the beginning of his administration there were complaints concerning the quality of the food and the discipline of the classroom, but that these matters were readily resolved. In 1860-1861, however, a more difficult situation arose, and there was outspoken dissatisfaction on the part of the older pupils. One of the causes was the inflexibility of the discipline, and the second was the strictness with which the rule against males and females being in each others' company was upheld. In both complaints some of the teachers sided with the pupils, so Rhoads said, and encouraged the pupils to rebel, and leave school. They remained in Jacksonville, and again with the support of a few teachers, brought their grievances to the board of trustees. The latter felt the matter was serious enough to hold a full-dress hearing, letting the pupils press their charges, and giving Dr. Rhoads an opportunity to tell his side of the story. At the conclusion of the hearing, the board upheld the doctor, but permitted the pupils to return if they would sign a formal apology and promise to obey the rules in the future. Two of the teachers, John D. Strong and James Dunlap, were dismissed at the end of the term, but John Loomis gave his support to Rhoads. To prevent a recurrence of conflict over discipline, the board decided to put some limits to the age of pupils who would be retained in the school. It was agreed that after five years no one could remain unless given special permission. The superintendent, confident of his honesty and convinced that he was making a great personal sacrifice to help the unfortunate blind persons, bitterly re-

sented what he considered to be a vicious conspiracy to get him dismissed.

As we review this incident, it seems clear that one of the basic causes was that mature men and women were subjected to a discipline which was suitable only for children. The matter of the relations of the sexes was more fundamental, and it too was a matter of discussion among the instructors of the blind at their meetings. It was generally believed that complete separation was necessary to prevent immoral situations from arising. Beyond this, it was held that to permit any social contacts would open the way to marriage between blind persons. This would be undesirable for two reasons; first, it would be impossible for blind persons to maintain normal domestic relations in a home, because it was well-known that blind persons needed help from the seeing in daily living; and second, it was also "well known" that many forms of blindness were inherited, and it would be a great tragedy to perpetuate blindness. We will have more to say about these matters in a later chapter.

Before we leave the subject of the troubles at the school in Jacksonville, we must observe that Dr. Joshua Rhoads was in no sense tyrannical in his conduct or insensitive to the problems of the blind. The contrary is the case. As John Loomis said, Rhoads pressed every appliance and every motive into service to develop the future man. He was successful as a teacher, as might be inferred, and his institution was regarded with pride and satisfaction by its friends. Let it be understood that he was humane and indulgent to people when necessary or proper.

Two incidents show how much the Quaker superintendent was devoted to the welfare of his pupils. Ed Corey was a young blind man whom Rhoads recommended to a traveling showman, R. Lee, who needed a piano player to accompany the exhibition of a panorama and sing a few songs in an interlude. Rhoads arranged for Corey to receive \$6 a week and expenses. Lee was also required to send the young man \$20 so that he could join the show at Columbia, Missouri. When he arrived, Corey found that Lee was a cheat who went under several names and owed money to some people. The police seized Corey's belongings for Lee's debts. Young Corey, in his distress, appealed to Dr. Rhoads, and the latter immediately contacted the local authorities in Missouri and secured the release of Corey's trunk. Then there was Catherine Reedy of Highland, Illinois, who stayed out of school to have an operation on her eyes, and wrote to Dr. Rhoads, "I thank you most heartily for the kindness and friendship you have shown me all the time and I hope the remembrance of it will be a source of pleasure to you as it is to me."

Catherine enclosed \$10 so that pearls for beadwork could be sent to her. She concluded her letter, "Tell my best respects to all my friends and to your family and receive the same from your most affectionate, Catherin Reedy."

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From 1850, with Joshua Rhoads firmly in command of the school, the trustees turned their attention to financial matters, fixing salaries for teachers and other employees, authorizing the expenditure of funds, preparing requests to the legislature for appropriations, and overseeing and maintaining the school property. There were several changes of personnel on the board because men moved from the city or for other reasons. Samuel D. Lockwood, who, as president, had guided the school from 1849 to 1857 was succeeded by Matthew Stacy, and resigned in 1863 "on account of advanced age." In 1857, an act of the legislature fixed the number of trustees at the other institutions in Jacksonville at six, but the Institution for the Education of the Blind already had only five members, and this was retained, but terms were limited to four years, and only two from the same county could be appointed. The act further stated that no trustee was to be employed by a board, nor should be be involved in any contract. Finally, no money was to be paid out of the state treasury until the money already appropriated had been accounted for. The act was intended to correct some of the irregularities that had occurred earlier. It should be made clear, however, that far worse misuses of office took place on the boards of the state hospital and the school for the deaf than on the board of the school for the blind.

In 1867 the legislature conducted an investigation of state agencies. At the Institution for the Education of the Blind nothing was found amiss, and the school was commended for the exemplary way in which its affairs were conducted. But the situation at other institutions demanded reform. In 1869 the legislature created a central Board of Commissioners of Public Charities. In adopting this course of action, Illinois was following the leadership of Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio which had integrated their charitable activities earlier. The board's duties were to inspect all public institutions (except the state penitentiary), all institutions receiving state aid, city and county almshouses, and jails, and private institutions in which the insane were kept. The board had no powers of administration, and could only "inspect, suggest, and recommend" to boards of trustees and to the legislature. At all the state institutions, the responsibility continued to rest with the boards of trustees. At the



Institution for the Education of the Blind, the Board of Charities, as it was usually called, had little more to do than to inspect the facilities, and review the proposed expenditures. Sometimes the Board of Charities recommended changes in appropriations, but the legislature did not always accept them. The board had an aggressive and efficient clerk, or secretary, in the person of Frederick H. Wines, who held the office, except for one term, for thirty years. At his suggestion the legislature from time to time extended the authority of the Board of Charities to require uniform accounting procedures and more careful control of finances. Wines was well-informed on the operation of state institutions and his occasional recommendations to the board of the school for the blind were generally sensible and progressive.

We have noted some of the financial problems experienced by the board of the school for the blind when the special tax prevailed, but in 1855 the legislature began to make biennial appropriations on the basis of requests presented by the board, and after that time, the regulation of finances was considerably easier. In 1867, the investigating committee found that the annual expenditures for operating expense rose from \$6,000 in 1849-1850 to \$25,000 in 1867, but in the remaining years of the Rhoads administration they increased only slightly. While the Civil War did not disturb the school unduly in its daily program, it did cause financial problems. Because of the rise of prices and the inflation of the currency, the board was pushed to keep expenditures within the appropriations. At one point it was necessary to delay the opening of school, and at another a small amount of money had to be borrowed to meet salaries and pay current bills.

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Aside from financial matters, but still related to them, there were two disturbing events that caused special management problems. The first, in 1865, was the giving up of a railroad right of way across the property of the institution, and the second, in 1869, was the destruction by fire of the building that housed the school.

The members of the board were startled when they received a letter from the president of the St. Louis, Jacksonville, and Chicago Railroad announcing that the railroad wished to acquire a right of way of 135 feet off the west side of the property. The railroad already had a right of way directly adjacent to the west side. The board immediately refused the application and appointed one of their number, Lawyer William Grimshaw, to represent them. But this was not the end of the matter; the railroad reminded the trustees



that in 1857 the state legislature had passed an act that gave railroads the right to acquire any state lands that were necessary for the operation of the railroad. The trustees protested vigorously against the seemingly high-handed procedure, but all appeals to the courts failed, and the railroad took legal possession of the strip of land. Even the legislature would do nothing other than require the governor to appoint a commission to look into the matter, but the latter also decided in favor of the railroad. The railroad (now, in 1970, the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio), proceeded to build sidings and depots, and generally to create a hazard to pupils and the public when going from the school to the downtown shopping area. But in over a hundred years, the crossing has always been guarded by watchmen or by warning bells, and there have been no accidents.

The second crisis, the burning of the school building, was described by the reporter for the *Jacksonville Journal* on Wednesday, April 21, 1869.

Our community was startled yesterday morning from its lethargy into which long security had thrown it, by an alarm of fire which caused an intense excitement throughout the entire city, as it was at once learned that it originated from the Blind Asylum—one of the noble institutions which the state had entrusted to our care and keeping. The excitement spread with a rapidity in keeping with the magnitude of the fire. Business was deserted and within a short time after the first alarm an immense concourse of people assembled on the grounds of the institution and rendered every assistance possible by saving the furniture and effects from the burning building and transporting them to localities where they were safe from the devouring elements.

The *Jacksonville Sentinel* reporter continued the story of the fire in a more dramatic vein.

The lapping tongues of flame, breaking through clouds of smoke could be seen from any point in the city. Although the engines were on the ground immediately, and water in great abundance could be obtained from tanks inside the Institution and cisterns outside, yet from the fact that the fire originated in the roof, from a defective flue, the point being very high and the strong winds converting the water from the hose into a spray, it was impossible to more than delay the flames until the furniture could be removed. Much was saved, but one fine piano, a splendid organ worth \$2,000, and a valuable library, besides much clothing, carpets and small articles were consumed. No lives were lost, though one small boy was found on the fifth story sound asleep

and was carried down, and in a few minutes the room was in a sheet of flames.

The pupils were taken into the homes of people in the neighborhood. Dr. Rhoads was cheered by the offer of a building just west of the railroad tracks that had originally been a boarding school (Berean College), but had been purchased by Miss Eliza Ayres, who planned to open a home for orphans. Into this structure, the pupils were soon moved and classes were resumed.

Thus the immediate needs of the school were met, but there remained the monumental and complicated problem of reconstructing the building. There was only \$20,000 of insurance, and the legislature, which was the only agency in the state government that could authorize rebuilding and financing of a new structure would not be in session until January, 1871. The trustees took the matter up with Governor John Palmer, and later he and the Board of Commissioners of Public Charity came to Jacksonville to consult with the board. The upshot of these meetings was that there was no authority other than the board of trustees who could undertake the immediate construction of a new building. While these matters were transpiring, there was a public discussion in the columns of some of the newspapers in the state concerning the advisability of moving the Institution for the Education of the Blind to some other location. The *Chicago Journal* was quite outspoken in declaring that the people of Jacksonville had not provided the necessary water and fire protection, and attributed this negligence to what it called the "Sleepy Hollow" air of the city. Of course the people of Jacksonville resented this attack, and the editor of the *Journal* spoke out vigorously in defense of the city. Public meetings were called at which the matter of aiding in the rebuilding of the school building was discussed. The trustees hoped to get the people to raise as much as \$20,000, but the citizens did not respond. They would only go so far as to agree to provide sufficient water service, not only to the school for the blind, but the other state institutions as well. In 1869, a reservoir, Morgan Lake, was built in the southeast part of town, and pumps and piping were to be installed to raise the water to a tower on the Mound. From here water was to be led to homes, business establishments, and the state institutions. But it was some years before the reservoir was filled, and the water works completed. In the meantime the newspapers in the state continued to needle Jacksonville on the matter. On the other hand, the board of trustees and the Board of Charities were satisfied that the water situation would be satisfactory.

The trustees also discussed whether or not the property should be sold and the school moved to a location where the railroad hazard would not exist. It was felt that the land would be very valuable for business purposes, because it was adjacent to the railroads, and that if it were sold the proceeds would be sufficient to acquire another site. But the idea was rejected because the present property had been landscaped, and there were usable outbuildings which had escaped the fire. These structures—stables, laundry, and workshop, along with the landscaping, the garden, and the orchard—had a value of \$20,000. It was therefore decided that no pecuniary advantage would be derived from selling the property. Taking all of these things into account, the board agreed that it would rebuild the school on the same site, and would use the \$20,000 received from the insurance company, plus about \$14,000 from the appropriations that were intended for repairs, improvements, and for current expenses. Once this decision was reached, the trustees considered what kind of building to erect. The old structure had just about reached its full capacity, and simply to replace it would not be satisfactory. Consequently it was decided that the board would put up one wing of what would eventually be a large building that would take care of future increased enrollment, and that the legislature would be petitioned to make appropriations when it met in 1871.

With the full concurrence of the governor and the Board of Charities, the board proceeded to employ an architect, let contracts, and push ahead with construction, hoping to have the building ready by the fall of 1869. There was talk about the trustees wanting to rush the building along so that the legislature would be committed to completing the building and keeping the school in Jacksonville. It does seem probable that the leading citizens of Jacksonville encouraged the board in the action they took, even offering to lend the money to get the work started as soon as possible. Dilger and Jungerfelt of Springfield were selected as architects, and construction proceeded. The building was not ready for the opening of school in 1869, but it was far enough along so that the pupils moved from the orphanage in early January, 1870. The structure was intended as the west wing of a large building, and therefore its front door faced west, and the east wall had no windows. It was three storied with a basement and an attic, and it had room for parlors, dining room and kitchen on the first floor. On the second floor were the school rooms, the music department, hospital, and assembly hall. The third floor was devoted to dormitories for the girls. The boys were housed on the second floor of the large workshop, which was not damaged by the fire.



The board continued to press the legislature for funds with which to build the main part of the building. It was pointed out that putting the male pupils in the workshop was not satisfactory, that the number of pupils was certain to increase, and that additional space would be needed. It was also noted that blind persons needed to be able to move about in uncluttered surroundings. Architect Dilger was authorized to proceed with plans for the main part of the building, so that they could be presented to the governor and the legislature in January, 1870. It was recognized that one big stumbling block was the lack of an adequate water supply from the city. Until the reservoir could be built, city water continued to come from deep wells, and as the water table fell in the summer, the supply was not sufficient to meet the needs of the city and the state institutions, and the latter provided most of their own water. The school for the blind placed large tanks in the attic and dug cisterns in the ground. The tanks were filled from wells, and the cisterns from the run-off from the school buildings. A similar system was provided for the west wing, but since it was planned to heat the proposed center wing by steam, that, along with the demands for kitchen and bathrooms, would call for a large and dependable city water supply.

The plans were submitted to the legislature, but no action was taken, because the city of Jacksonville had not yet developed its planned water system. It was at this time that the newspapers throughout the state declared that the school for the blind should be moved elsewhere. Even the trustees were inclined to feel that it was the only course to follow if the city continued to delay.

So it was not until 1873 that the legislature appropriated \$75,000 for the construction of the center wing, and the building was not occupied until September, 1874. The east wing was added in 1882, thus completing the building as Dr. Rhoads and the trustees envisioned it in 1869. More will be said about the structure in a later chapter. When the school was confined to the west wing, the crowded conditions were not favorable for maintaining a high quality of instruction. Although the academic department continued to raise its standards somewhat (we have noted that classes had been roughly graded), the music department was forced into such unsatisfactory quarters that it was difficult to provide for orchestra and chorus rehearsals, and many adjustments had to be made for lessons and practice time. There was now no organ. The shop facilities were also greatly reduced because the shop building was used as living quarters for the boys and men.

Because the number of students who could be accommodated was so limited, the superintendent was given permission to "discriminate



in receiving or retaining pupils in any case of immorality of the pupils, or of the parents, affecting the deportment and character of such pupils, and may refuse to receive them, or may dismiss them when proper to guard the morals of the institution." Under the rules laid down already by the board, only those who would benefit could be admitted, and now with his discretionary power broadened, Dr. Rhoads noted that the age average was lower.



Joshua Rhoads never got to move into the larger building with the school, because in June, 1874, he was required by Governor John L. Beveridge to resign his post. While it was a generally recognized fact of American political life that supporters of the party in an election should receive appointments to public posts, Governor Beveridge's action does not seem to be wholly a political act, although Rhoads and the trustees chose to interpret it in that way, even though Governor Beveridge, a Republican, succeeded another Republican, and before that there had been only Republican governors since 1857. It may be that Beveridge wanted to remove Rhoads because the latter had been appointed in the administration of a Democratic governor, Augustus C. French, or possibly Beveridge felt that it was necessary to put his supporters into office so that he might strengthen his own political machine. But neither of these seems as likely as a third possibility. In the minutes of the board of trustees for March 13, 1874, is this statement:

It is currently reported in our hearing of late that Governor Beveridge has said that if necessary to depose Dr. Rhoads from the position of superintendent . . . he will appoint a new board of trustees . . . who will be in favor of such a measure. It is further reported that the present board was about to hand in their resignation. . . . Therefore, on our parts, that inasmuch as we as trustees bring no charges against the superintendent, but believe him now as in the past, in connection with his wife and his daughter, Miss Alice, well qualified and competent to discharge the duties of superintendent, we therefore propose to retain Dr. Rhoads and family in their present positions, and remain ourselves on the board of trustees until we are succeeded in office by others whom the governor may appoint. Retaining, however, at any time we choose the privilege of voluntarily resigning our trust.

Whatever prompted Governor Beveridge's action, Dr. Rhoads was greatly surprised when he and the trustees were approached by a

gubernatorial emissary who requested their resignations. Rhoads in response declared that in the thirty-five years since he had been in education he "never attended to outside matters, except years ago to have a conversation with Governor [Joel A.] Matteson [Democrat, 1853-1857] and lately with Governor Beveridge, always to my disadvantage." The superintendent, with Quaker submissiveness, said that he would stand on his record, and would do nothing else than to "abide in the quiet" and let matters take their course without any interference on my part."

On Governor Beveridge's side, while there is no direct evidence, it appears that he felt, political considerations notwithstanding, that there should be a change in the superintendency of the school. In fact he felt that the whole system of public charities needed to be changed, and he proposed to the legislature that the authority of the Board of Commissioners of Public Charities over the state agencies should be strengthened. To do this it would seem that he wanted men in charge of the state institutions who would actively support his policies. The governor was encouraged by some of his friends, notably N. W. Branson, a lawyer of Petersburg, Illinois, who was later a trustee of the Institution for the Education of the Blind. Branson was a stout supporter of high standards for state institutions, and he wrote to Governor Beveridge,

I think your suggestions are just the thing and that a bill embodying them ought to be passed [it was, in 1875], and it is highly desirable that the initiative should be taken by friends of the institutions. No bill ought to be passed whose framers are unacquainted with the practical operation and management of the Institutions; . . . and the bill before being passed should be submitted to officers of various institutions, who are better acquainted with the details than any member can expect to be that there may be no unnecessary friction in the enforcement of the bill.

All of the above considerations help to explain why members of the board of the school for the blind were replaced, and why the new board accepted Rhoads' resignation and named a new superintendent, The Reverend Frank W. Phillips, M. D. The new trustees were John Mather, John H. Wood, and John H. Lewis. John Mather, a former mayor of Jacksonville, a businessman, and a long-time member and secretary of the board of Illinois Female College, wrote to Governor Beveridge saying that he accepted the trust and promised to do his best for "the unfortunates for whom the school had been established."

Whatever may have prompted the forced resignation of Dr. Rhoads, and in spite of his occasional problems with discipline, he deserves the highest commendation for his leadership in developing a school for the blind in which pupils were given the kind of instruction that represented the best thought of the times. His school offered the nearest possible equivalent to the education given in the common schools of the day, and it was in the forefront of schools for the blind in the United States. In February, 1874, Rhoads briefly noted the state of the school, and incidentally stated his criteria for a good school.

Three men are learning the broom trade only. The other sixty-nine are attending classes in literature, many are also studying music. All but one can read more or less fluently. . . . The redness of their cheeks and the roughness of their sports, indicate attention to their physical wants. Attention is also given to spiritual needs by giving them the opportunity to go to church and Sunday school, and by daily prayer in the school itself. Moral culture is shown by the quietness in the school and the good conduct of the pupils at most times.

At the last meeting of the old board of trustees, the members gave their "most cheering congratulations to him in the consciousness of a life spent in public service for twenty-three years in the education of the blind in Illinois, discharging with uprightness and with genial heart and true manhood his important duties as superintendent." This is an eminently fair evaluation of the services of Dr. Joshua Rhoads. He was a man for his season—not ahead of it, not behind it, but right on the mark.

Dr. Rhoads was seriously ill and could not be present at the last meeting of the board. He never fully recovered his health and he died in Jacksonville on February 1, 1876.

## Chapter Three

# Consolidation and Expansion, 1874-1890

Joshua Rhoads so firmly established the form and function of the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind that few changes were made by his immediate successors. The larger building for which he had worked so hard was completed and made it possible to enroll many more of the blind persons of the state. In his last years, Rhoads had begun to distinguish between academic education and vocational education. This trend continued and the workshop for mature adults was distinct from the school itself. Rhoads began the grading of the academic work. This was continued and sharpened, and the curriculum so far as possible became like that of the public schools. The senior department became a high school and on completion of the course a diploma was granted by the board of trustees. The music department continued to be strong, concentrating on preparing teachers. Rhoads' successors did make a significant advance in requiring physical culture to be a part of the daily program. They laid the ground work for a legislative appropriation for a gymnasium. Also, while the embossed characters of Boston line letter continued to be used in reading material, thought was given to the introduction of New York point, and braille was coming into use. Thus in all these areas the period we are about to examine in detail was one of consolidation and expansion.

Joshua Rhoads was succeeded by Franklin W. Phillips, another physician who had given up his practice. Phillips, the son of an itinerant preacher, was born in Kentucky on November 5, 1827. His schooling was in the elementary department of Woodward College in Cincinnati. After a few years there, Franklin, at the age of thirteen, was apprenticed to a carpenter and cabinet maker. When he was eighteen years old he had a call to enter the ministry. After some years of preparation he was accepted into the Kentucky Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and he held several posts in and around Louisville. In the latter city he developed an interest in medicine, attending lectures at the Kentucky School of Medicine. From 1856 to 1864 Phillips practiced in Todd County, but because conditions were so disturbed in the last years of the Civil War, he moved to Illinois, resumed his preaching, and joined the Illinois Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was a respected and effective minister and until 1874 served churches in several of the larger cities of central Illinois, including Jacksonville.



During this period he became well-known as a capable organizer and administrator. Personally, he was tall, dignified, confident, and affable.

The Reverend Dr. Phillips was appointed to the office of superintendent of the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind by the board of trustees on June 4, 1874. As we have noted, probably there was pressure from the governor to force the resignation of Rhoads. When the trustees resisted the pressure, they, too, were forced to resign. But once the new members took over, they were free to name their own man. Four persons were nominated: Professor William H. De Motte, the president of the Illinois Female College; John Loomis, the principal teacher in the Institution for the Education of the Blind; Robert Brude, about whom nothing is known; and Franklin W. Phillips. On the first ballot Phillips, De Motte, and Loomis each received one vote, but on the second, there were two for Phillips and one for De Motte. There was some feeling in Jacksonville that the trustees had not searched the field, but were influenced by the fact that, being Methodists, they had turned to leaders in their own denomination. It is doubtful, however, that religion was the determining factor in the selection of Phillips; rather, the trustees were looking for a man who could manage the housekeeping of the institution efficiently, and one who would be firm in maintaining good order among the pupils. As one reads the minutes of the board of trustees, it is clear that they desired to leave all day-to-day problems in the hands of the superintendent, and to accept his recommendation for the appointment of teachers and staff. Meeting only once a quarter, they could do little more. More frequent meetings were difficult to arrange because only one member was a resident of Jacksonville. Further, under the legislation of 1875, the authority of the trustees and the superintendent was more closely circumscribed by the oversight of the Board of Commissioners of Public Charities, because the latter was empowered to require uniform accounting and strict observance of budget limitations.

Among the first matters to which the board and Superintendent Phillips turned their attention was furnishing and equipping the new building. Dr. and Mrs. Phillips (who was the matron), and Board President John Mather were designated to go to Chicago and procure furnishings. The items selected were all serviceable, but those in the offices and living quarters of the superintendent were quite luxurious, so much so that a legislative committee said, "Too much space and extravagance is devoted to parlors and we would respectfully suggest to the superintendent the propriety of devoting this comfortable space to the benefit of the inmates." The superin-

tendent of the school for the blind was not especially singled out, however, because the legislative committee was equally critical of the superintendents of other state institutions. The timing of the censure should also be considered. It was 1875, at the height of the panic of 1873, when governments, like private enterprises, were cutting down on expenditures.

The new building, consisting of the west wing and the center wing, was occupied in 1874, the east wing in 1882, and the north wing in 1888. The completed building was a large and imposing structure of four stories and an attic. There were accommodations for more than 200 persons, including pupils, the shop workmen, many of the teachers, a few domestic employees, and the family of the superintendent. The females were quartered at the west end and the males at the east.

Architecturally, the building was a classically designed structure of red brick, with stone quoined corners, a gabled roof, and a simple pediment over the center wing. The front facade was later changed by fire escapes that provided iron verandas or galleries between the center and the end wings. The building was heated by steam and lighted by gas. In 1884 electricity was introduced, being generated by a dynamo located in the boiler room, and in 1892, this plant was replaced by a larger machine, thus permitting all the rooms to be lighted. Another modern convenience was the gasoline engine used to operate the laundry machinery. A description of this engine brings a smile to later mechanized generations: "In the laundry is an 'Ottomotor' a gas engine, because there is not a sufficient head of steam to run the machinery. It occupies but little space, is always ready, gives out no heat, does not require an engineer to run it, is no expense except when at actual work, and has no Nihilistic tendencies." The last remark probably referred to a practice of the Nihilists, a political sect, of throwing bombs and causing explosions. The gasoline motor did work well, but it was difficult to find a proper lubricant for it, although a composition called "Castoro" was reasonably satisfactory. City water was used after 1875, but the uncertainties of supply made the continuing use of wells and cisterns necessary. Bathrooms with flush toilets, installed in the new building, created a sewage disposal problem, and eventually a connection was made with the city drains.

In the rear of the main building were auxiliary structures—a boiler house for the heating system, a laundry, a bakery, carriage house, and stable. There was a dairy barn for the excellent herd of registered Holstein-Friesian milkers, and in 1882 an additional twenty-two acres of land to the northeast of the campus was pur-

chased for pasture. There was also a large two-storied brick building which was the shop and storeroom for teaching broom making and other trades to adult men. In 1889 a long-planned cottage for senior girls was built to the west of the main building.

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Dr. Phillips made few changes in the teaching staff; John Loomis remained as principal teacher until 1881, and the system installed by Joshua Rhoads tended to be perpetuated. For a time the school was divided into four departments: primary, intermediate, junior, and senior, but the intermediate department was soon eliminated. In general the teachers were left to do what they pleased in their classrooms, but in 1880 Phillips said that he was "endeavoring to get the school out of those ruts into which teaching degenerates and to bring it abreast of the times, and by the increased activity and life to increase its usefulness." We know something about the educational program at the school from the reports of the state superintendent of public instruction, who was directed by law to ask for reports from all educational institutions in the state and to make personal visits to the charitable institutions "educational in nature." S. M. Etter, for example, visited the school at the graduation exercises in 1876, and heard the students in the examinations given at that time. He said that the course of instruction covered the same ground as the course in the common schools of the state, that the instruction and methods were "of the very highest order," and that the pupils exhibited "a proficiency that I have rarely seen excelled in any school." A few years later, Superintendent Henry Raab visited the school and found the graded system operating effectively, with promotion from class to class and graduation by diploma. The standing of pupils was determined by monthly and quarterly oral and written examinations, and the results were reported to the parents.

In the last years of Rhoads' administration there had been a trend back to reliance on oral instruction, largely because there were few purchases of reading materials. To remedy this Phillips bought textbooks in Boston line letter, now more available in quantity because the American Printing House for the Blind had been supplied with funds by Congress. Dr. Phillips held that textbooks would enable pupils "to accomplish more in a given time, and to gain a more comprehensive knowledge of the subjects studied than if confined to oral instruction. Our pupils need a course of training, which, so far as it can be done, will make them self-reliant. It is hoped by textbooks to make them feel independent of



each other in their studies, and consequently more self-reliant.”

We do not know what books were purchased in 1882, but in 1887 the textbook supply was replenished by ordering the following titles from the American Printing House for the Blind:

Number of Each	Title
5	History of our Own Times, by Justin McCarthy
20	Epitome of English History
20	Problems in Physics
20	Handbook of Physics
10	Handbook of Natural Philosophy
10	Handbook of Chemistry
10	Huxley's Physiology, 2 vols.
10	Classification in Zoology
5	Thackeray's The Four Georges
5	Morley's Englishmen of Letters
5	Prescott's Conquest of Peru, 4 vols.
5	Marmion
5	Bittersweet, by Holland
5	Selections from Ruskin's Seven Lamps of Architecture
5	Conquest of Granada, 3 vols.

These textbooks were printed in Boston line letter, the style of type developed by Samuel G. Howe at the Massachusetts school for the blind. Boston line letter was a simplified Roman style, but without serifs, and with capital letters omitted. From this type, books were embossed, and Howe found that they could be read with reasonable ease by tracing the embossed lines of the letters with the fingers.

Raised or embossed letters impressed on hard paper by means of type were first used by Valentin Haüy, the man who introduced education for the blind into France in the last part of the eighteenth century. From France the use of raised print spread to other countries in Europe and across the channel to England. A number of modifications were made in Haüy's type, and Howe studied these as he traveled in Europe at the time he founded the Massachusetts institution. It was as a result of his observations that he developed Boston line letter. Other educators were not completely satisfied with this type. In Philadelphia, N. P. Kneass, who felt that the blind should use correct orthography, introduced capital letters. This improvement was accepted by Howe, and when the American



Printing House for the Blind began large-scale printing of textbooks and other material, Boston line letter with capitals was used.

Other teachers of the blind in both Europe and America realized that embossed line letters were not easy to read, and that many blind persons were unable to achieve satisfactory speed. Among these teachers was Louis Braille, a blind teacher of the blind in France who found out that it was much easier to read lines that were made of raised dots. He learned of a cipher system using dots that was developed by a French army officer, Charles Barbier. Braille adopted the idea, although he dropped Barbier's system of a two by six dot figure in favor of a cell of six dots arranged in two columns of three each.

These punctiform letters were impressed in stiff paper, and Braille found that blind persons could read them with the finger tips more readily than they could read other embossed symbols. Braille developed punctuation signs, and later a complete number system and musical notation were added. The dots were easily impressed by hand using a frame to guide a metal stylus in the placement of the dots. One disadvantage was that the dots had to be placed in reverse, beginning at the right, and when the paper was removed, it was turned over so that reading would go from left to right.

Braille perfected his system and was teaching it to his pupils by 1837, but its use spread slowly, and it was not generally adopted in France until the 1860's. It came into favor in England in 1868. Braille's notation was brought to the United States in 1860 by Dr. Simon Pollak, a St. Louis physician who was a founder of the Missouri School for the Blind and a member of its board of trustees. He visited Europe in 1859 to study eye clinics and institutions for the education of the blind. The teachers at the Missouri school adopted braille for use in literature classes and for instruction in arithmetic. Louis Braille's punctiform system was also known to other educators of the blind at about the same time, but it was not used in United States schools other than at Missouri. There it was popular because it could be used for personal communication, for taking notes, and so on.

At the New York Institute for the Blind in New York City, Braille's dots were also known in the 1860's, and Superintendent William B. Wait studied them very carefully. He came to the conclusion that raised dot letters were superior to solid line letters, but he felt that Braille's system was not satisfactory in either the cell used or the symbols for each letter. He therefore devised a new alphabet based on the principle of letter frequency. The cell used

by Wait was two dots high and varied from one dot to four dots long. Wait became a persuasive promoter of his system. He developed two kinds of slates for using it, and a number of teachers of the blind began to teach it to their pupils. In 1878 a committee of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind recommended that the musical notation in New York point be recognized as standard.

There were others, however, who felt that Braille's system was best, if it was modified for American use. The chief proponent of this idea was Joel W. Smith, a blind teacher at the Massachusetts school. He based his system of braille on that which had been developed in England (English braille), but removed some of the contractions in the system, and in 1872 produced what he called "modified braille," which soon was called American braille. Smith declared that braille was superior to New York point, because it was easier to read the two dots by three dots cell, and in effect was thus more legible to blind readers.

The New York point and the braille system were both known at the Illinois school as early as 1883. This date is fixed by an exchange of letters between Dr. Phillips and W. R. Betham, a blind man in Chicago. The latter wrote to Phillips asking for a braille slate. Phillips sent a slate for writing New York point, but Betham returned it, saying that he had thought he had made it clear that he wanted a slate for writing braille. Phillips replied that he could not send a braille slate because he had none.

Phillips felt that there was not enough reading material available in either New York point or braille to justify dropping Boston line. It was not until 1888 that he began to think seriously of changing to point books, and then he expected to adopt the New York system. William S. Phillips, who succeeded his father as superintendent, took further steps, and in the first year of the term of Frank H. Hall, New York point was officially adopted, although Boston line continued to be taught also. The thing that decided the matter was the agreement made with superintendents of schools that the American Printing House for the Blind would produce half its books in New York point.

At the same time that the use of New York point was spreading, the use of braille was also being expanded. As we know, braille was widely used in England, and Joel W. Smith's "modified braille" was accepted at the Massachusetts institution. The use of braille received a strong boost when Francis Campbell (later Sir Francis Campbell), a prominent English educator of the blind, visited in the United States and taught music for a time at the Massachusetts

school, bringing with him his favorable experience with braille. We have also noted that the braille system was used at the Missouri School for the Blind, and the superintendent, Dr. John T. Sibley, crusaded vigorously for the adoption of braille rather than New York point. The biennial meeting of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind met in St. Louis in 1884, and Dr. Phillips and a number of teachers from Jacksonville attended. Undoubtedly they became acquainted with the virtues of braille. The pupils at Jacksonville also had contacts with those of the Missouri school, and from them some of the Illinois students learned braille. In 1886 four pupils at Dr. Phillips' school ordered copies of *Progress Magazine*, a London periodical printed in braille. At the same time, the young men also asked for a list of contractions that were used in English braille.

Thus, twenty years after the introduction of raised dot letters into the United States, and its almost universal acceptance, the educators of the blind were faced with the difficult choice between braille and New York point. It would be another two decades before the New York point-braille controversy would be resolved in favor of braille, only to be succeeded by twenty-five years of further discussion of exactly what variety of braille was best. At first glance, it would seem simple to reach agreement on such a fundamental matter as the means of reading and writing for the blind, but its very importance made it a case of seeking perfection, rather than settling for anything less. In all this long "battle of the types," the Illinois school for the blind would play a key part.

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The music department continued to be emphasized. In 1886 Professor Wallace P. Day was engaged to head the department, thus continuing the practice of many years of sharing with the Illinois Female College in the employment of well-qualified music instructors. Day was a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, and he had taught at the Ontario, Canada, school for the blind. At the Illinois school he taught piano, pipe organ, and harmony, and directed the choral groups.

Wallace Day was deeply concerned about music education, attending the meetings of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind, and participating in the discussions about the teaching of music. He believed that students should be taught more than musical technique. He said, "We show the child how to use his hands in striking the keys, but then he is apt to leave off the most important word—that is to listen. If we inform the pupil more



with the idea of listening, technique would not be such a dry study." In his teaching Professor Day sought to instill musicianship by developing sight reading. He felt that it was not enough to teach music by rote, especially in chorus singing. The latter, he said, encouraged individuals to sing when they would not do it alone. In the chorus the pupil "became familiar with pitch, the sense of rhythm, and felt secure of his own part in choral progression, acquired an awareness of harmonic or contrapuntal treatment, and also gained acquaintance with musical masterpieces." He said also that too much time was consumed in committing words and music to memory and in singing each part separately. To overcome the handicaps of memorizing, Day advocated the use of punctiform notation, at first New York point, but later American braille.

The music part of the curriculum of the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind was conducted on a high level. William S. Phillips even equated it to a "normal school of music." This was because much emphasis was put on training pupils as church musicians and teachers. The public performances of pupils were well attended. The reporter for the *Jacksonville Journal* wrote:

Whatever might be the condition of the weather, or the prospects, if a concert is announced the chapel is certain to be overflowing. Our citizens well know that the music which they will hear there will amply repay them for any discomfort in reaching the Institution. Even before the hour announced for the beginning of the entertainment the chapel began to rapidly fill, and it was necessary to place chairs in all the aisles, and still they came. The chapel was filled to the utmost seating capacity, and yet many stood or sat in the halls, near the doorways, in order to hear as much as possible of the music. Probably never was an audience better pleased or more highly delighted, and every selection on the program was received with rounds of applause. The highest ecomiums [sic] of praise would not be out of place in speaking of the concert. It gives evidence of the most assiduous care and attention on the part of the pupils and efficient and intelligent drill on the part of the teachers.

The first number on the program was an overture played by the orchestra of twenty-three pieces; then followed vocal solos, trios, choruses, piano pieces and solos on piccolo and clarinet. The music was by such contemporary classical composers as Mendelssohn, Spohr, and Bellini; other music was by Rive-King, Campana, and Blumenthal, names unknown to us today. While all the musicians, according to the reporter, did well, and their music was warmly



received, several were said to perform in a manner which would be creditable to professionals.

It is clear that music was given a prominent place in the curriculum, but at the same time it was the official policy not to sacrifice other training to music. Pupils were not admitted to the study of music on an advanced level until they were well-adjusted in their academic work, and had attained a degree of mobility and responsibility so that they could manage their own practice hours. On the other hand, if students showed that they had talent they were allowed to come back to the school after graduation. In return for assisting with younger pupils, such capable young people were allowed to continue their musical education.

In a third area of the curriculum, physical education, significant advances were made in the 1880's. Physical education (physical culture or gymnastics were contemporary terms), found a place in schools for the blind, just as it did in schools for the seeing. Beginning in Europe, particularly in Germany, in the early nineteenth century, the movement to improve the physical condition of the body spread to the United States in the post-Civil War period. In general, physical culture made use of apparatus such as bucks, horses, parallel bars, flying rings and ladders. Calisthenics, often supplemented by the use of Indian clubs and dumbbells, were used to strengthen the muscles of the arms and back, as well as improve posture.

C. S. Fraser, the superintendent of the Institution for the Blind at Halifax, Nova Scotia, was one of the first to introduce physical culture. He reported on the matter to the American Association of Instructors of the Blind in 1878. At the New York Institute for the Blind and the Pennsylvania Institution for the Education of the Blind, calisthenics and exercise on apparatus were provided for both boys and girls in special rooms set aside for physical culture.

Educators of the blind had long been concerned with what are called "blindisms," and were then known as "idiosyncrasies." These were erratic facial movements, rhythmic nodding of the head, aimless arm and hand movements, and accompanying them were poor posture, and shambling gait. Since physical culture put emphasis upon marching to music, and the performance of other systematic exercises, it was believed that the physical condition, and hence the appearance, of blind persons could be improved.

It was this aspect of physical culture that won the support of Dr. Phillips at the Illinois school. In 1888 he and the trustees asked the legislature for an appropriation to build a gymnasium and drill hall. At the time he wrote that blind children, "since they cannot

romp and run, are often physically weak and imperfect of body development, they frequently come to us with hollow chests, pale faces, flabby muscles, unsteady and timid in movement, and largely lacking in those physical qualities so essential to healthy and vigorous mental action. Our first work is with the body. The pupil must be induced, and if necessary required to take exercise. All the muscles, if possible, must be brought into healthy action. To do this work properly, a well-equipped gymnasium is almost indispensable."

It was not until 1895, however, that the gymnasium building was completed and in use. In the meantime, under the direction of W. S. Phillips, the son of Dr. Franklin W. Phillips, and acting superintendent after his father's death, a marching drill team was organized. A. C. Hinchee was appointed to teach stenography and military drill. Two companies were formed—Company A consisting of sixteen young men, and Company B with sixteen boys. W. S. Phillips wrote: "Progress was slow, but after many discouragements it was found that the sightless could drill. All who took the drill were much benefited in improved step and carriage, and a freedom of firmness of step never before seen in this institution. The drill also awakened much interest in the minds of the people with regard to the needs and possibilities of the sightless."

The "Blind Cadets" took part in the parade that took place in Jacksonville in 1889 at the centenary of the United States under the Constitution, and at a soldier's reunion in Peoria. The boys and young men, of course, greatly enjoyed the trips and the excitement. The drill squad did not last long because in 1890 both Phillips and Hinchee left the Institution.

During the 1870's and 1880's the emphasis on teaching trades as a part of the curriculum decreased mainly because attention was directed toward the shop where broom making, chair caning, and mattress and rug making were taught. Brush making, a trade important earlier, was dropped by 1883 because hand-made brushes could not compete with the machine produced brushes which were appearing in quantity.

It was expected that a pupil would complete his academic and musical education, and then, if he wanted to learn a trade, he would spend a year or so in the shop. This program was not always followed, and some of the older boys and young men who were still enrolled in regular classes also learned to make brooms. At the time many men who had not attended the school were admitted to the workshop. Men of all ages, even those in their fifties, were allowed to enroll in the shop course.

Dr. Phillips, like all superintendents before and since, was con-

cerned with the problem of livelihood for blind persons. He considered that if a man learned the trades of broom making, chair caning, and mattress making, and had the capital with which to purchase the broom making machinery and other tools, totaling \$60, he could open a shop in even a small town and make good. Some men who had started in this way had later expanded their operations and employed sighted workers. At one time the legislature had provided a fund for outfitting men who had been trained in the shop, but this had been discontinued.

Dr. Phillips was very well satisfied with the institution's shop program. In 1884 he reported that of ten men who had completed the course and had received certificates of proficiency, eight were successfully operating their own businesses. At the same time he also felt that many blind men needed to work under sheltered conditions, and that the State of Illinois should provide a working home for blind men, not at Jacksonville, but in a larger center where the market for the products of the shop would be greater. Phillips declared,

Not a term passes but some man about to leave the shop expressed a desire to remain and work for board and clothing and care, and (if such a place were provided), how happy he would be. But no such home is before him, and in the dark he goes forth to the battle of life, and under many discouragements, of which seeing people know nothing by experience, he endeavors to solve the problem of self-support, the difficulties are increased ten-fold by his blindness. We can prepare him for the effort here, but cannot care for, nor aid him after he leaves our shop. Our work is done, his must now begin again.

Other schools were faced with the same problem, and in Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and other centers, working or industrial homes were provided, sometimes closely associated with the schools, but often as separate institutions. Eventually, in 1911, the Illinois Industrial Home for the Blind was opened in Chicago, and the shop in Jacksonville was discontinued.

By the late 1880's the sharp distinction between the academic and the trades programs was breaking down in all schools. The emphasis on handicraft as a means of livelihood was turning toward considering manual training as an integral part of the total preparation for life. We have already noted that "physical culture" was becoming "physical education," and by the 1890's, the education of body and mind was joined by the education of the hand. Superintendent William S. Phillips stated the case for manual training:



Following the line of a deservedly popular reform, it is now proposed to require pupils above kindergarten grade, to do some work daily in the shop department; to educate, not just the head and the hand, but the head and the hand together. The boys, while members of the school, and while they are receiving the usual mental and moral training . . . will learn to do the work now done in the workshops for blind men. . . . It is also proposed to devote more time to the training of the girls in the various industries in which blind women are capable of acquiring skill. Experience shows that they can learn to operate the sewing machine, the knitting machines, to knit and sew by hand, to crochet, to make and repair their own clothing, to make baskets, to cane chairs, to make nets and hammocks, to perform domestic duties . . . and to cook.

To set up separate shops and work rooms for manual training and domestic science, the state legislature was asked for an appropriation of \$3,000. It remained for a succeeding superintendent, Frank H. Hall, to integrate fully manual training into the total school program.

Another hand skill introduced in the 1880's was piano tuning, which had proved, both in Europe and in the United States, to be a lucrative occupation for blind men. It required that a man have a good ear and at least an elementary knowledge of music along with rudimentary piano playing ability. It was then sometimes said "that the ear of the blind is trained and is very sensitive to sound; this not only makes them good piano tuners, but tends to make them experts in that work." Blind persons, however, did not automatically possess an ear for pitch, but like seeing persons, might be taught to distinguish between the sounds of musical notes. It was also true that blind persons, of necessity, were more aware of sounds than the sighted. Properly trained blind men could make a living for themselves at piano tuning, and therefore the incentive to learn was very great. Success came to the individual in piano tuning, as in every other vocation, not only through technical skill, but because of the ability to travel about freely from one job to another without help, and because he was neat of person and clothing and socially adept. Piano tuning and repair is still taught at the Illinois school in the 1970's, and it is one of the few strictly vocational courses offered.

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Admission policies remained much the same as they had been since the Illinois school opened, but beginning in the 1880's there



was a tendency to admit persons as young as six years, although the stated age was ten to twenty-one. Criteria for admission still remained that a person's eyes be in such condition that he could not be educated in the public schools and that he be mentally, physically, and morally capable of participating in the classroom activities and school social life, but in the interpretation and application of these criteria problems arose. There was no way in which the ability to learn could be determined before a person was admitted so the school was forced to rely on the statements made by the parents or sponsors of those who applied. Consequently there were dismissals for inability to learn. In one case, Superintendent Phillips wrote that the school "will try George again. We will keep him if he can learn, otherwise, we will send him home." In another case he wrote that he had received the application of Henry Willis, and he wanted to be sure that Henry was not "mentally deficient as is his sister who was at the school." W. J. Underwood of Belleville was told that Henry Stumpf's mind "seems to be backward so that he cannot learn."

Closely allied to the problem of mental retardation were the psychological problems of social and moral behavior. The rules against the use of liquor and tobacco were strictly enforced, although exceptions were made, and pupils and shop men were allowed to remain if they would agree not to repeat the offenses. To John Patton of Chicago, Dr. Phillips wrote, "Come back to school. Try not to forget the lesson you have learned and refrain from strong drink." Phillips said to Joseph Bonham that his son would be received again if he would "conform to the regulations of the school-room." On the other hand, John Hockerson was sent home because "his morals are such that his influence is only for ill among the pupils. He has been a terror to every teacher he has had here. He regards none of the requirements of the institution which he can evade or shirk. I must relieve the pupils of his influence and example, and the authorities of his insubordination." William Howard was suspended because his influence and example were "against good morals and good order, and a source of care and trouble to the authorities. He can come back in September if he will give up tobacco and conform to the rules." A Mr. Edward's son, Henry, was also suspended. "I do not think you know how he conducts himself, and he does not get any better as he becomes older. He is immoral, overbearing, quarrelsome, fighting and disobedient to rules. He brought tobacco in his trunk." A. J. Taylor was given two trials, and each time with same result. "As soon as work is mentioned to Jack, he weakens and wants to go home." Lizzie

Silti's parents were informed that their daughter had been at the institution three terms. "We have given her a fair trial and I think she cannot learn. Her temper is bad and at times she is dangerous to the other pupils. I think it not worthwhile for her to return to the institution." The school also had problems with an epileptic; a pupil, age twenty-one, who attacked a blind employee with a knife; and a case of pregnancy.

A rough estimate is that the dismissal rate was about 10 percent of an enrollment of 200, but this does not take into account those pupils who left voluntarily or were removed by their parents. It is not a particularly high rate, but it does indicate that either the means of screening were not adequate or that the methods used at the school were such that they could not cope with serious problems of adjustment. The evidence presented above also may be interpreted to mean that Phillips and his teachers recognized that the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind was a public school, and they sought to uphold the legislative dictum that it serve all blind persons who would benefit from attendance. In fact, the principal reason advanced by Phillips for the dismissal of some pupils was that they prevented the others from getting the most out of the program. The solution of the problems of admission and dismissal had to wait a few years until psychological testing was developed.

We have noted that another problem of admission concerned the degree of vision. Here again there was no means of screening. Some persons were accepted who proved to have sufficient sight so that they could read Boston line letter with their eyes rather than use of the sense of touch. Phillips believed that it was injurious to the eyes to read embossed print, and he sent such persons back to the public schools, but this was not a satisfactory solution, because there was no program for the partially sighted there either.

Cases where an operation or other treatment for the eyes was indicated, Phillips continued to refer to the Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary in Chicago, now a state agency. After 1886, however, a Jacksonville surgeon, Arthur E. Prince, began to perform operations for cataract. Dr. Prince was the son of Dr. David Prince, a physician and surgeon well-known throughout Illinois, who conducted a large private hospital and clinic in Jacksonville, and Dr. Arthur Prince performed his operations there. Superintendent Phillips described the case of one pupil: "The operation for cataract was performed on William's eyes yesterday afternoon and was very successful. There was no pain attending it, owing to the use of cocaine in the eye. He was not put under the influence of ether or

chloroform, but was entirely conscious all the time. He is now at Dr. Prince's infirmary and will be there for a week and then come back to us. When he can without injury to his eyes, I will send him home but will write to you when he is coming. You must not worry about him."

The charge for the operation and the week's care at the hospital was just \$25 per eye. In this way the Jacksonville school began to be concerned with the correction of eye conditions. Four years later every pupil was given an eye examination on entrance, and an annual check-up was provided for.

Student life during the 1870's and 1880's experienced changes as younger children were admitted, and closer attention had to be given to the social needs of the pupils. Superintendent Franklin W. Phillips set the tone for the school. He was a compassionate man, as we have seen, but he was also somewhat austere, and he felt that strict standards of moral and social conduct should be upheld. Like Dr. Rhoads, he believed that blind persons should not marry, and that it was best that strict segregation of the sexes be maintained. Boys and girls did eat in the same dining room, sing in the chorus, and attend chapel, but they were not allowed to talk with one another, nor mix in any way. For a while they were together in the school room, but even that was abandoned. Some resident schools, notably that of Iowa, held "sociables"—parties for both boys and girls—but Dr. Phillips did not approve of them. On the other hand, pupils were provided with games, and they were allowed to have some pets. The list of expenses for 1879-1880 included bird seed, bird cages, croquet sets, insect cases, and tickets for attendance at public entertainments that came to the city. Lecturers, musicians, and other entertainers were also brought to the school to appear before the students. In the 1870's and 1880's there was no break for Christmas vacation, not only because of the difficulties of travel, but because students became restless and dissatisfied, and sometimes did not return promptly to school. Not to send the pupils home to be with their families for Christmas seems needlessly cruel, but it must be remembered that the great celebration of Christmas as a secular holiday is mostly a twentieth century development. At the school there was a Christmas program in the chapel, mostly musical. There was also probably a special dinner, and the distribution of small gifts of candy and fruit. One of the high points in the life of the pupils was the annual trip by train to their homes at the end of the school year in May or June. We do not know when the practice of sending groups of students under the care of chaperons on the trains began, but by 1884, the custom



was well-established. In that year fifty-six pupils went north on the Chicago and Alton Railroad, and twenty-seven went south. The railroad supplied passes for the chaperons and some of the pupils, but for most students the transportation expense was borne by parents or guardians.

Single pupils going home at other times were placed in charge of the conductor, or as in the case of Charlie Chambers, in care of the express agent. Charlie, who had had "chills and fever," (pneumonia?) in December, and was being sent home to recuperate, could not leave on January 4 as planned, because the express company said the weather was too cold for Charlie to ride in the poorly heated express car.

In 1888 the beginning of decentralization of student life out of the main building was begun. For a number of years educators in residential schools had been concerned about the sterility of the daily life of their pupils. Most schools, including the Illinois school, had adopted what was known as the "congregate system" of bringing all aspects of school life under the single roof of one large building, in which the entire community slept, ate, and went to school. A few other schools, following the lead of the Massachusetts Institution for the Education of the Blind, introduced the "cottage system"—separate buildings for small groups of twelve to twenty pupils. In these cottages they would live under conditions similar to a large family. Each pupil in the group had the opportunity to help with the house work, and it was believed that in this way there would be greater individual development and a stronger sense of personal responsibility for the good of the community. The principal obstacle in the way of the broad acceptance of the system was the cost of construction and maintenance of the many small buildings that would be necessary.

But when the Illinois school needed extra room, it was decided to move in the direction of the cottage system. While the structure that was erected was for the fairly large number of forty, at the same time the building itself was much like other large private residences of the period. The girls were housed in rooms of two, three, or four, and a home-like living room was provided. The girls continued to eat with the other students in the central dining room in the main building. Thus the "girls' cottage" was a compromise between the ideal cottage system and the totally congregate system. It became the pattern upon which further pupil housing would be constructed.

Two important aspects of school life inaugurated by Dr. Rhoads remained—the daily chapel service, changed for a time to an evening



hour, and the Sunday afternoon Bible classes. For these services Bibles, especially the New Testament, in raised print were provided to the school by the American Bible Society. The chapel service consisted of a short prayer service, a talk by the superintendent or one of the teachers on some moral subject, and general announcements. The Sunday afternoon classes were taught by the teachers as part of their duties, using the International Sunday School lessons in raised print. The lessons were contained in the *Sunday School Weekly*, published at the American Printing House for the Blind. Pupils were also required to attend the church of their parents if the weather permitted and a seeing person was available to go with them.

As in all residential schools, for the blind as well as for the seeing, pupils had little time in which they were unsupervised. The schedule instituted by Dr. Rhoads was maintained without much change by Dr. Phillips:

Rise .....	5:30
Study and musical practice .....	6:00
Breakfast .....	6:30
School .....	8:00
Dinner .....	12:00
Study and musical practice .....	1:00
School .....	2:00
Vocal music .....	4:30
Supper .....	5:30
Reading to pupils .....	6:30
Prayers .....	7:30
Retire .....	8:45

As we have noted, military drill and calisthenics were added late in the 1880's, and shop work for pupils was introduced. Calisthenic exercises were held in the classroom periods, but military drill was held in the afternoon period set aside for study and musical practice.

But, in spite of a full schedule some students got into trouble and had to be sent home. Undoubtedly lesser offenses required on the spot discipline, but there is no evidence that physical punishment was commonly inflicted; more likely the simple deprivation of privileges, or such approved punishment as being required to stand in the corner, or to stay in bed for a given time were used. Corporal punishment was used, but it was strictly regulated by the board of trustees, who required that it be administered by the superintendent in the presence of witnesses.

There were accidents, children were sick, and others found time for casual and mostly harmless mischief. Young Albert Seip was one of the latter. Dr. Phillips had to write to his father,

On the way to the Institution, your son, Albert, was induced to trade his watch for a violin to one of the boys for \$5.50, applying the money in paying \$3.00 to James Marlam for an outfit as a book agent and \$1.05 to the Institution, leaving a balance of \$1.45, but since the transactions, it has leaked out that the boy had no right to trade his violin, and consequently Albert has to refund the money for which he sold the instrument to the boy. As he has spent most of the money, it will be necessary for you to send him \$5.00 in order to pay out. This should be attended to at once as Albert is somewhat worried about it. [!]

There was dissatisfaction with the food, the dormitory rules, and the disciplinary measures. One incident was serious enough to come to the attention of the board of trustees. An investigation was held and the result was that C. A. Hinchee, the boys' supervisor, resigned, even though he declared that he was the victim of circumstances and untruthful statements. The matter seems to have been principally concerned with the food service. Apparently there was not sufficient quantity, and the quality was sub-standard, because the board ordered the superintendent to employ more cooks, to increase the "variety of edibles," and to give the "closest scrutiny to the quality of the food and to the cooking." The board also ordered that correspondence between pupils and parents or guardians was not to be curtailed, and letters were not to be inspected.

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Dr. Franklin W. Phillips was a dedicated educator of the blind. He had the respect of the public, the confidence of the pupils, and the undivided support of the board of trustees. Phillips' letters to parents and to former pupils indicate a deep interest in the welfare of the blind. He often went to considerable trouble to supply blind persons not in the institution with reading material and the tools and materials with which to carry on trades. Throughout his administration board meetings were mostly concerned with the ratification of appointments of teachers, the formal granting of diplomas and certificates, the approval of budgets presented by the superintendent, and the authorization of the payment of bills.

The doctor was not a particularly imaginative leader. He made few changes in the system which had been developed by Joshua Rhoads. At the same time, under Phillips' direction the building

facilities were enlarged, and with some few additions remained adequate until the 1920's. Phillips was aware of the changes that were taking place in the education of the blind, and in such matters as physical education, the cottage system, industrial education, and the use of punctiform reading material, the Illinois school was not far behind the leadership of such schools as those of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

Dr. Phillips died on January 17, 1888, after almost a year of serious illness. During this period, the day-to-day management was in the hands of Wililam S. Phillips, the doctor's son who had assisted his father and held the position of "clerk," an office similar to that of the present-day business manager. For a short time A. C. Wadsworth, president of the board of trustees, was acting superintendent, but he refused to accept the post permanently. Governor Richard J. Oglesby received applications from "deserving Republicans," even one who said, "In my feebleness and old age if there is anything better for me than riding through the swamps practicing medicine for a living, I would like to have it." But the popular choice of the trustees, former students, and friends and relatives of the students was William S. Phillips. The latter, born in 1856, was a graduate of Illinois College, a competent amateur musician, and, through his close association with his father, a capable administrator, thoroughly familiar with the education of the blind. Fourteen letters of recommendation were received by Governor Oglesby on Phillips' behalf. With the approval of the governor, the board of trustees appointed him to be superintendent for the year ending June 30, 1889, and later extended his term for one more year.

During the three years in which William Phillips was acting superintendent and superintendent, as we have noted, the teaching staff was reorganized, New York point and braille were introduced, physical education was strengthened, and the cottage system was introduced. Phillips participated in the meetings of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind and invited that organization to meet in Jacksonville in 1890. He also conducted a study of the application forms of institutions for the blind. He found them to be varied in content, and generally not providing the essential information to enable the administrator to make decisions on admissions. Before he could bring his findings to the attention of representatives of the institutions for the blind, he was refused reappointment by the trustees. The reasons for this are not clear, but were at least partly political, since the new governor, Joseph W. Fifer, was in office. It is also possible that the difficulties over the food situation and the consequent investigation by the board had

an adverse affect on the board's support. Yet the separation of Phillips from the school was not entirely unamicable; he attended a meeting of the board with his successor, Frank H. Hall, and he was also present at the meeting of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind in Jacksonville.

Thus by 1890, the Illinois school was well-prepared to receive the new concepts and methods in the education of the blind that came rapidly in the 1890's and the decade following. The basis was laid for innovations in reading and writing as a result of the general acceptance of punctiform characters and the invention of a machine with which to write braille letters. The widespread use of the typewriter had its roots in the 1880's, as did the experimental psychology that so profoundly changed the education of the blind as well as the education of the seeing.



## Chapter Four

# Revolution in Education, 1890-1893

Frank Haven Hall arrived in Jacksonville in July, 1890, and began a change in the writing for the blind that resulted in a revolution in the total education of persons without sight. The new superintendent of the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind was known to the trustees who appointed him as an efficient administrator and an effective teacher, but he had other equally great talents. His inventive genius and quick grasp of the essentials for a proper education of the blind brought about revision of the teaching situation in his own school and in all such institutions in the United States, and, indeed, throughout the world.

The man who inspired this profound change was born on February 4, 1841, in Mechanics Falls in the state of Maine. He attended the local schools where his mechanical aptitude was sharpened by the do-it-yourself atmosphere of nineteenth century rural and village life. Young Frank also developed an intellectual bent that was characteristic of the New England of the time, and he was interested in books and learning. After his days in common school, he held various jobs on the farm and in the small factories that were a feature of towns like Mechanics Falls which had a water supply to power machines. Hall served briefly in the Civil War in 1861-1863 as a hospital steward in the Twenty-Third Marine Volunteers. When he was mustered out he spent a short time in the preparatory school at Lewiston, Maine, which later became Bates College. After a short experience as a school teacher, Hall, like many other young men of New England in the post-Civil War years, moved west and settled in northern Illinois, securing a place as a teacher and superintendent in the school in Earlville. In 1866 the young man accepted the headship of the schools of the larger town of Aurora, Illinois. Here he stayed for almost ten years, earning for himself a warm place in the hearts of school trustees, parents, and children. He made an auspicious start when he won the job over thirty-four other applicants, and the trustees soon found their choice justified because the new superintendent proved to be a most capable administrator. He was a genial and persuasive man, but one who had strong personal convictions about the desirability of adopting what was new and progressive. At Aurora he firmly replaced older pedagogical techniques, such as learning by rote, with newer ones that emphasized the application of abstract knowledge to concrete situations. He used the

latter approach effectively in the eighteen textbooks which he edited or wrote in his lifetime. A good example of his method is found in the widely used Werner arithmetic books, two editions of which are in the Historical Room of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School. While progressive in his educational thinking, Hall was old-fashioned enough to believe wholeheartedly that schools should prepare children to assume adult responsibilities, including the business of making a living.

Suave and even-tempered though Hall was, still, in the public schools, he had to please persons of all shades of conviction and prejudice about educational matters, and in 1875 he welcomed the offer of a group of farmers near Aurora to head a work-and-learn school, Sugar Grove Industrial School. Here Hall was free to try out his idea that education was all of a piece, and Sugar Grove was to teach "life-lessons." As he wrote, "We learned to use the milk tester and we read Shakespeare. We investigated the subject of cattle raising and studied Virgil. We learned how to raise hogs and reveled in the beauties of Homer. We studied the subject of grasses and hay and mastered cube root."

At Sugar Grove, Hall worked out many of the methods of teaching agriculture which he later used in conducting farmers' institutes. Here, too, he renewed the acquaintance with machinery that he had acquired when he had been a factory hand in Mechanics Falls. Also while he was at Sugar Grove he began to speak at farmers' meetings, an activity that he continued throughout his life.

As well as being an educator Hall was a good businessman, and the income from his speaking engagements and from other sources was invested in a dairy farm and creamery near Aurora. During the ten years at Sugar Grove, in addition to his teaching, he also ran the farm and dairy, a general store, and a lumberyard. At the same time he took a leading part in community affairs, serving as post-master and township trustee.

We do not know the details, but it is probable that the Sugar Grove Industrial School, which was experimental in nature, did not attract sufficient patronage. Whatever the reason, Hall returned to public school teaching and administration, becoming the superintendent of the schools of Petersburg, Illinois. At this place he became acquainted with Nathaniel W. Branson, a lawyer and a politician high in the councils of the Republican party. Branson was first appointed to the board of trustees of the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind in 1877. Lawyer Branson, who had been a state legislator, for a long time had been interested in the state charitable institutions and had been instrumental in bringing about

the reorganization of the Board of Commissioners of Public Charities in 1875. Hall was at Petersburg only one year (1887-88) and returned to his old post in Aurora. In this short time Hall made a most favorable impression on Branson. He proposed Hall's name for the Jacksonville superintendency when the board of trustees decided not to reappoint William S. Phillips, and the governor assented.

While Hall had had no experience in teaching the blind, he looked forward to the challenge that awaited him. To prepare himself for his new career he made a quick trip East to visit the schools at Boston, New York City, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, and stopped at the American Printing House for the Blind at Louisville. He thus became acquainted with the work of the foremost educators of the blind—E. E. Allen at Philadelphia, A. A. Agnanos at Boston, W. B. Wait at New York, and B. B. Huntoon at Louisville. As we have seen, all of these men were vitally concerned with the problem of providing a means for blind persons to read and write. In conversations with them he heard the arguments pro and con for New York point, braille, and Boston line letter.

Hall was an experienced administrator with seemingly no difficulties in getting the institution to run smoothly. He had the confidence of the trustees, and his wife and his son were in key posts. As bookkeeper (chief clerk) he had E. C. Schurmann, who had served under William S. Phillips. As we shall see, Hall did have the responsibility of overseeing all aspects of the admission and dismissal of pupils, just as previous superintendents had, and he carried on a large correspondence with parents and guardians. Nevertheless, he was able to devote time and attention to the fundamental question of what was the best way to educate blind children and youths.



From his visits to the eastern schools Hall quickly grasped the fact that the key was to provide a varied literature for pupils to read in a form which could easily be read with the fingers. This was nothing new, because Rhoads and both the Phillipses had secured all the books available to them. But Hall, with his public school experience, saw also that if blind children were to be educated as were seeing children, it was necessary to have work books, lesson sheets, and other ephemeral classroom teaching aids. He found that a certain amount of this kind of material was supplied to pupils by the printing shops associated with the schools he had visited, but even they could not supply it quickly because of the methods used for printing. The most common way of getting this kind of material was from the dictation of the teacher to the pupils, with the latter



using a slate, a metal or wooden frame for holding a sheet of paper, and a stylus, a pointed instrument for impressing the dots of New York point or braille in the paper. Pupils also learned to write ordinary script by the use of a sheet of stiff paper with embossed lines. Over this was placed the writing paper, and guided by the raised lines, the pupil could write with a common lead pencil. But this was a slow method, and was mostly used for writing to parents and sighted friends. For communicating among themselves, pupils used one of the systems of raised dots.

For these reasons one of Hall's first purchases from a \$3,000 appropriation that he requested of the legislature was two small hand presses and fonts of Boston line letter, New York point, and braille type. He relied on the advice of B. B. Huntoon, the head of the American Printing House for the Blind, and the Perkins Institution supplied matrices for casting braille type at the Boston Type Foundry. The presses were purchased in St. Louis from the Central Type Foundry Company. The first piece of work done in Hall's new printing shop was the well-known quotation from Isaiah 42:16 (revised version): "And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; in paths that they know not will I lead them. I will make darkness light before them and crooked places straight. These things I will do and I will not forsake thee." The introduction of printing presses to the Illinois school, and Hall's continuing concern about writing for the blind certainly was a great step forward to make "darkness light before them." Hall was assisted in the shop by several pupils, among them Arthur Jewell, who became the school printer, and John B. Curtis, later a stout champion of Hall's braille writer. By October, 1891, the press was in full operation, and music in braille, and other materials such as Sunday School lessons in Boston line were being produced. Plans were laid for the publication of books in Boston line letter and music and school exercises in American braille. But Hall turned away from the use of Boston line, and the books were never done; instead he became interested in American braille as the notation for all printing. Hall was immensely pleased with his printing project. He wrote to B. B. Huntoon that he "would not be without the press and type for five times their cost."

Hall soon found, however, that he had not solved the problem of educating blind children simply by providing more reading material. The symbols in which printing was done were also important. It was generally agreed that Boston line letter was not satisfactory. While New York point was considered to be very good, and the majority of schools and the American Printing House for the Blind officially



endorsed its use, yet there were many advocates of braille. As we have noted, still another dot system, American braille, also called improved braille, had been developed by Joel W. Smith of the Perkins Institution. American braille was used at Perkins and a few other places. Whether New York point, American braille, or Louis Braille's notation was used, writing with slate and stylus was a slow process. Hall observed this difficulty, and in addition was very conscious of the great significance of the invention of the typewriter and its superiority over handwriting for many purposes. Certainly a writing machine using punctiform symbols would be a very important tool in the education of the blind.

The same idea had occurred to other people before Hall arrived at it for himself. As early as 1878, J. Morrison Heady, a blind man in Elk Creek, Kentucky, announced his "diplograph"—a machine to write "several copies that may be read by touch and by sight, either in Roman alphabet, New York point, or Braille." The cost would not exceed \$30, and several school superintendents said that they would buy it when it was made. But the construction of a working model was more difficult than Heady had anticipated. In 1880 he told the American Association of Instructors of the Blind that he had exhausted his funds on experimental models. He had been forced to confine his efforts to developing a machine to emboss the Roman alphabet and New York point. Even this device was not successful, and after a few years the Kentucky inventor dropped the project.

Hall was aware of the interest of other persons in inventing a writing machine, because he was a reader of *The Mentor*, a magazine in ink print about the affairs of the blind edited by Joel Smith at the Perkins Institution, and Smith published notices about such devices. In 1891 he reported:

A point writing machine is now the *desideratum* in schools for the blind, and several attempts have been made in this direction. An inventor in Bridgeport, Conn., has now an unfinished model on hand. Another model has recently been made by Thomas C. Orndorff of Worcester, Mass., and a patent has been applied for. Still another has been brought out in England, and *The Mentor* has been promised one of these machines as soon as they are on the market. If there are others in progress, let us hear of them.

In the next issue of his magazine, Smith returned to the subject, likening the use of a typewriter to a point writing machine. He mentioned the "punctograph" which was said to have been patented by a Miss Streshky of Austin, Texas, which interestingly, was based

upon a Hall typewriter. It was only coincidence, because Frank Hall had no connection with the Hall typewriter. Another machine described by Smith was invented by a Mr. Halsted of Aberdeen, S. D.: "The instrument proper consists of seven buttons, or keys, on a little box 3 by  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches. The buttons are arranged thus . . . . ., the lower key being a spacer." The machine was designed for New York point, but Smith said it could easily be made for braille. Thus we see that the six keys and spacer which were a principal feature of the machine which was later designed by Hall was already known. Other machines were received and discussed by Smith from Lowell, Mass.; Cairo, Egypt; St. John, Canada; and another from Worcester, Mass., invented by J. G. Arnold. If Smith received a model of a machine, he described it at length, commented on the mechanical features and pointed out weaknesses, as for example, he said about Arnold's machine, "The inventor has fallen into serious error in not allowing sufficient leverage in the embossing keys, and this makes the writing laborious. If only a few points were made, this objection would not be serious; but to make continuous writing easy, the fingers must be overtaxed. In writing with this, or any other keyed machine, the finger must do the work which is done by the whole hand when the stylus is used."

The machine made by William M. Smith of New Brunswick won the approval of *The Mentor's* editor:

It is constructed for writing Braille, is provided with six keys and a spacer, prints upward, and the writing can be read without removing the paper. It is twenty-one inches in length by four inches in width. The keys are at one end, and a whole character is made at a single stroke. The spacing for letters and for lines is automatic. It can be adjusted for writing on one side of the sheet only for interlining. It is safe to say that the ideas worked out in this machine are entirely original with the inventor, and we understand that the model was constructed entirely by him. . . . We venture a suggestion in regard to the location of the keys. Instead of bunching them together at one end, we would bring them to the front and place them in one horizontal row, thus enabling the writer to use both hands freely and to better advantage than with the present arrangement.

Again we find that many of the characteristics of the Hall writer were found in machines which antedated his.

Frank Hall was a steady reader of *The Mentor* and was thus aware of the various machines that had been made for the writing

of New York point and braille. In the early months of 1892 he, too, was thinking about a machine that would write New York point, but as he had already found out, the students preferred braille, and so did his teachers, especially those in the music department. Their support of New York point was only because there was more reading material available in that system. What is more, Hall came to the conclusion that it would be simpler to make a machine for writing braille because every letter would be of uniform width. Hall was never specific about any help that he got from Smith's comments in *The Mentor*, but he did say,

It was obvious at the outset that . . . a machine must be quite simple and easy to manufacture, thereby placing the cost within the limited means of the poorest of the class it was designed to benefit. Next it must have power to emboss the points of the Braille system in perfectly sharp relief, and yet the touch must be easy, giving the greatest rapidity without fatiguing the operator.

Having clearly in his mind what kind of a machine he wanted, he sought technical advice and called upon Gustav A. (Gus) Sieber. The latter, born in 1863, was the son of a German immigrant, who opened a gun shop in Jacksonville at 213 East Court Street, just off the public square. Young Gus learned the gunmaker's art in his father's shop, and he became skilled in general metal work through three years' experience in Chicago machine shops and foundries. As Sieber told the story, "[Hall] showed me what he called a slate and stylus to punch dots in paper and wanted a writer to do this work." Hall explained about the braille system of six dots in a cell and told Sieber that he wanted a machine like a typewriter in which each dot would be controlled by a separate key, so that any braille character could be made at a single stroke by pressing the right combination of keys.

With this information and Hall's explanation of the braille cell, and with the typewriter in mind, Sieber created a suitable machine. It is clear as one examines a Hall writer that it resembles a typewriter because the carriage moves one space to the left as the keys are released after a letter is impressed on the paper, and the styli in the embossing head or actuated by the keys much as are the type bars on a typewriter. In fact, Sieber's great contribution was not only in designing and making a carriage mechanism and linkage between keys and styli, but that he did it in such a way that there was never any question of infringement on existing typewriter



patents. It is possible, also, that it was Sieber's design that permitted the styli to operate from the back so that the operator would make letters in the normal position for reading them, as did some of the writers described in *The Mentor* rather than in the backward reverse method of the stylus and slate.

Sieber rapidly made a model, which is no longer in existence, but was described by Hall:

[It] was built mainly of scrap iron and was fastened to a rough pine board for a base. It was anything but elegant in appearance; but the dots made by it were equal to those made by the stylus, and, although the working was heavy, and the machine roughly constructed, the measure of our success at this point was greater than I expected.

And so, although not much notice of Sieber's part in its development has ever been taken, it seems clear that the braille writer which bears Hall's name was the happy result of Hall's creative mind, which analyzed the problem and envisioned a solution, and Sieber's highly developed craftsman's skill. It is peculiarly fitting that brain and hand worked together to advance the education of the blind which is itself so largely dependent on the sensations received by the brain from the hand.

The story here related leaves unanswered the question, "Who really invented the braille writer?" As we have noted, Hall must have received ideas from Smith's notes in *The Mentor* about writing machines. In addition he was familiar with another machine made by E. J. Nolan. It was operated by electricity, and the embosser had punches arranged in two rows of three each which were activated by a key or lever for each stylus, and "many more keys." There was a space key in combination with the carriage and a step by step feed mechanism. (This machine is mentioned nowhere else than in a letter written by Hall.)

Gus Sieber, forty years later, sought to be acknowledged as the inventor of the Hall braille writer. He wrote a letter to the American Foundation for the Blind in which he said, "Hall showed me what they called a slate and stylus, showed me the work they did, and wanted a writer made on the order of a typewriter—having six keys and a spacer. He never gave me any idea as to how to make it, but what it should do."

There is no doubt that Sieber did invent, or adapt from some other source, the particular mechanism that went into the Hall writer, but it is clear from Sieber's own statement and from those



of Hall that the basic idea of how the writer should work was Hall's. But neither can Hall claim to be the inventor, because he never patented the machine. In fact he said that the ideas that went into his machine, and those that went into others that he knew about were instances of combinations of principles and mechanisms that were found in one or another combination in each machine, and therefore none of them were patentable.

Nevertheless, Hall did feel that he was threatened for infringement on a patent which was being applied for by Thomas C. Orndorff of Worcester, Massachusetts, whose machine was mentioned by Smith. Soon after Smith examined this machine, which would write both New York point and braille, he informed Hall that Orndorff considered Hall's machine an infringement on his patent. Hall immediately wrote to a firm of patent lawyers in New York to look into the matter. He was especially concerned that there might be some interference with his new project to make stereotypes on the writer, and he directed the lawyers to make for him a caveat (a legal claim) to having been the first to do this. Hall was relieved when he heard from his lawyers that it was their opinion that there was no reason why he might not patent his machine, "although it is for the same purpose and intended to do the same work" as Orndorff's machine.

About the same time that Hall wrote to his lawyers he received a letter from Orndorff who, much to Hall's surprise, said that he had not seen Hall's machine. Hall consulted with his friend and adviser, Nathaniel W. Branson. On the latter's advice Hall told Orndorff that he was going ahead with the manufacture of his machines, and that he was prepared to defend himself against the charge of infringement. In fact, said Hall, he had himself made an application for a patent for two reasons:

1st. I am willing to give the blind of the world all there is in it. The machine will be sold at cost. This was so stated before we knew of your machine and before the date of your letters patent. . . . 2nd. It was our belief from the first that the main features of the machine are unpatentable or if patented would not be worth the paper upon which it is printed, from the fact that the same devices were used for the same purposes years ago. The superior excellence of my machine is in the fact that the arrangement of the parts and general construction of the machine are such that there is no lost motion and a minimum of power is wasted to overcome friction.

Nothing further was heard from Orndorff. Although in the end Hall

did not patent his machine, he did have the phrase "Patent Applied For" placed on the first lot of machines that were manufactured.

As Hall reflected on the whole matter, he suspected that the Orndorff charge of infringement was a plot by William B. Wait and the New York point advocates, aided by the Remington Typewriter interests, and he asked his friend Smith to "keep both eyes open for anything that may occur in which the firm [of Wait, Orndorff, Remington and Co.] is interested." Hall's suspicions were groundless, although for many years Wait continued to oppose the use of braille and to promote the use of New York point. It was not until 1934 that the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind abandoned the New York point, adopted braille, and purchased machines that were derived from that of Hall.

Who did invent the braille writer? Hall spoke of his activity in having the pilot model constructed as "inventing" it, and, in a large sense this is true, because as he said, even though the mechanical principles used were already applied, the particular way in which they were applied was new, and the overall result was a unique machine, different from all others, because it was sturdily built, reliable in operation, and simple to use. If any part of the Hall writer was patentable, it would have been the detailed mechanism which Gus Sieber devised to carry out Hall's general design. The whole story of the invention of the braille writer is much like that of the typewriter, the sewing machine, the wheat reaper, and other mechanical innovations. In the case of all of these machines, there was multiple invention about the same time because the device was needed, but out of these, one machine succeeded because it was better adapted to fulfill the purpose for which it was intended. It can safely be concluded that Hall was the inventor of the braille writer in the same sense that Howe invented the sewing machine, McCormick the reaper, and Scholes the typewriter.

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Now we must go back and follow the story of the braille writer from the model made by Sieber in the spring of 1892. Hall, with his driving enthusiasm and urge to action, wanted Sieber to undertake immediate mass production of the writer, but Sieber advised Hall to take the model to Chicago, where proper patterns and dies could be provided. As Hall said, "a fortunate chain of circumstances" led him to the Munson Typewriter Company where T. B. Harrison was the superintendent and C. J. Seifried was the designer. The managers of the company "big heartedly" assigned these men to the task

of producing Hall's writer. The two men fulfilled Hall's requirement that the braille writer should be made to sell at as low a price as possible. Hall said that theirs was "a labor of love," because of the modest price that was charged for making the machines—ninety-four of which were made for \$940. Hall also paid out between \$200 and \$300 for six pilot models, which probably included \$65 paid to Sieber for his work. Twenty machines were retained by the Illinois school and the others were sold to individuals and institutions for the blind in the United States and foreign countries, including Australia and China. By 1911, the year of Hall's death, 2,000 writers had been sold world-wide.

Frank Hall was proud of the fact that neither he nor any person connected with the development and production of the writing machine profited from the invention. One of the favorite stories told by Hall's children was about the time their father met Helen Keller, then age thirteen, at the World's Fair in 1893, and upon being told that Hall was responsible for the writer she used so often, she put her arms around his neck and gave him a big kiss on the cheek. Hall's daughter said that her father could never tell of this incident without tears in his eyes.

Harrison and Seifried made five regular models of the braille writer, and a sixth one somewhat larger in dimension for Professor E. D. Campbell of Ann Arbor, Michigan. When the five models arrived in Jacksonville on May 27, 1892, Hall immediately gave a demonstration to a reporter for the *Jacksonville Journal*, and the latter wrote a most enthusiastic report which was a full column long. The public first saw the machine at an exhibition of the work of the Institution for the Education of the Blind at commencement time on June 7, when five students competed against each other in a speed trial. The winner wrote eighty-five words a minute from memory and thirty-one from dictation.

Hall set about winning the educators of the blind over to the use of the writer. First he sent machines to blind persons whom he knew would have much influence and who were already strong advocates of the use of braille. These were John B. Curtis, E. D. Campbell, and Joel W. Smith. Smith, as might be expected, at once gave enthusiastic approval. *The Mentor* published a description of the machine along with a picture, and Smith wrote, "In its present form this writer is capable of still further development, so that it will in the near future, revolutionize the methods of writing and printing for the blind. For embossing braille it ranks with the best type-writers for producing ink print, and embossing by hand is so slow and laborious that the introduction of this machine is a long stride



of progress. By this invention Mr. Hall has conferred upon the blind an inestimable boon."

Hall was not so fortunate in winning immediately the approval of superintendents of schools for the blind. In July, 1892, he attended the meeting of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind at Brantford, Ontario, and he took along a braille writer. He tried to get on the program to present his machine formally to the meeting, but the chairman, A. G. Clement of the New York State School for the Blind at Batavia, would not let him do so, probably because Hall's machine used braille rather than New York point, which was favored by Clement and other educators. Hall therefore invited members of the association to come to his hotel, where his daughter, Nina, demonstrated the machine, and achieved the impressive speed of one hundred words a minute. Edward E. Allen, the superintendent of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, said, "We . . . who were there assembled in convention were almost dumbfounded with surprise and delight. The convenience of this little machine to the blind can only be understood when one realizes that it became to them what an ordinary typewriter is to others." But, in spite of the virtues of Hall's writer, the superintendents at Brantford voted ten to nine to support New York point as official, because they did not want to see any change that would interfere with the printing of books, since the American Printing House for the Blind had just embarked on a large publishing program for New York point. At the same time the men who supported braille "immediately took steps to cause a portion of the money from the Congressional grant [to the American Printing House] to be used in printing braille music . . . and thus we hope to have the presses at Louisville, before many months, striking off braille."

Hall realized that if his writer was to have the usefulness which he thought it should, he would have to join other educators such as John T. Sibley of the Missouri school, E. E. Allen of Pennsylvania, and Joel Smith and A. A. Anangos of the Massachusetts school in promoting the use of braille. He believed that if "intelligent" blind persons who knew both braille and New York point would compare them with attention to ease of writing and reading the braille would win. He therefore prepared a test for the two systems and sent results to blind persons whom he knew could read both braille and New York point. The test results showed that there was no significant difference in the number of characters used for a given sentence between New York point and English braille, but that the improved, or American braille, with contractions could be written with fewer dots and in shorter space, thus being faster to write and read. The



results of Hall's test, plus the experiments of some of his correspondents, demonstrated to them and to Hall the superiority of improved braille, and thus that the Hall writing machine would have wide use. As a result of his efforts Hall gathered several testimonials for braille. Dr. John T. Sibley of the Missouri School for the Blind, who already favored braille, but was hesitant to abandon New York point because so much reading matter was in that notation, decided to go all out in support of braille. Hall was also pleased that California "dropped into the Braille column, and Kansas [had] . . . caught the infection."

While he was converting leaders of education for the blind to the use of American braille, Hall was also corresponding with the blind persons who were using the first lot of braille writing machines that had been produced. He found that they were very enthusiastic, and offered several suggestions for improvement, some of which he adopted. However, he rejected recommendations that the machine be made lighter and that cheaper materials be used. When he finally decided on a production model, he said that the new machine would "make less noise, handle the paper better, permit a backward motion of the carriage without touching a key, produce a click for each cell when the gauge is moved backward, and that the space key [would be] lower." Among the suggestions he rejected was one by Smith that both sides of the page could be written on by the braille writer. Hall didn't think this was a good thing, but it has since become a universal practice, thus reducing by half the thickness of braille books.

The mechanical principles of the first production model were followed in later machines. So far as can be determined, Harrison and Seifried separated from Munson and Company and took over the manufacture of the braille writers. Eventually Seifried alone devoted his attention to the Hall writer and other appliances for the blind. When he died in 1912, the Cooper Manufacturing Company purchased his business and continued the production of the writers until about 1921. At that time the M. B. Skinner Company acquired the Cooper Company. The Skinner Company were manufacturers of steam specialties and engineers' supplies, and Skinner at first planned to discontinue the making of the writers because it wasn't profitable. But when he found that it would work a hardship on blind people, he decided to continue production under the name of the Cooper Engineering and Manufacturing Company. He also made some improvements, spending \$5,000 for improved designs and methods of manufacture, and continued to sell the machines at a nominal price. Eventually the production of Hall writers was taken

over by the Howe Memorial Press associated with the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind, and, for a short time, by the American Foundation for the Blind. The Braille Institute of America also manufactured them. Today (1970), the American Printing House still sells the Hall writer—now named the “New Hall Braillewriter,” which is much like the original in appearance and operation. The most important modification of Hall’s original design is found in the Perkins Brailier, now the most used writer, where the carriage carries the styli rather than the paper. A somewhat less expensive and lighter machine, the Lavender Braille Writer, which also has the styli in the carriage, is also sold by the American Printing House for the Blind. There have been a number of European-made writers that use the six key principle. Examples of various models of the Hall writer and others are exhibited in the Historical Room of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School.

As Frank Hall studied the first model of the braille writer that came to him from Seifried and Harrison in May, 1892, he at once saw it could be used to produce, quickly and cheaply, a stereotype plate from which many copies could be printed. At the time stereotypes were made by laborious and slow handwork, using a mallet and punch to impress dots on copper plates, following a method developed in Europe, or, as in the United States, by handsetting braille type just as one did letter type, and either printing directly from it or making a lead stereotype from a paper matrix.

After Hall returned from the convention of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind at Brantford, Ontario, he began experiments with the braille writer to test its ability to make stereotypes. He used bristol board treated in various ways to make it stiff enough to be used as a stereotype. The most successful experiment, however, was done with sheets of tinfoil backed by a shellac, turpentine, and litharge mixture. With this he was able to make moderately satisfactory printed copies on his press. Another problem was in producing the kind of raised dot that was necessary for good finger reading. On one occasion Hall said, “I find many difficulties confronting me in my efforts to make a stereotype on the machine. If I could gain a hundredth of an inch in the height of the dot for every ten hours I spend experimenting, the dot would soon be too high!”

In the course of his experiment Hall came to see that if a thin sheet of metal could be put in the machine and the dots impressed on it, it would be more durable than a tinfoil sheet, and it would eliminate all need for using a stiff paper as a matrix. He needed a stronger and heavier device than the braille writer itself. He took the problem to his friend Seifried, and the latter set about the de-

development of a suitable machine. As Hall wrote to Smith,

I am positive that we can make stereotypes by using the machine made matrix, but just now I am devoting my whole attention to an attempt to make a metallic plate itself with the machine. I have succeeded in doing this though we have not as yet attained the degree of perfection desired. I spent yesterday in the machine shop in Chicago and came home during the night.

Hall brought with him "a piece of metal containing only about three square inches that is the first work done by a machine not yet quite completed for which I have great expectations."

We should keep in mind that Hall's experiments in making matrices and stereotypes were carried on in the midst of his regular duties as superintendent incident to the preparations for the opening of the school as usual in September. At the same time Hall was also, as we shall see, the chairman of a committee of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind to plan for an exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair, and he carried on an extensive correspondence on this matter. He said at one point, "It seems to me that the work accumulates in spite of my best efforts to clean up the desk." Another matter that he had to take into account was the few months remaining for him to serve as superintendent. It appeared that the Democratic Party would win the forthcoming election in September, 1892, and the Republicans like Hall would lose their jobs.

In spite of difficulties he did succeed in getting Seifried and Harrison to complete the experimental machine by September 7, 1892. He brought it back to Jacksonville with him from one of his overnight trips to Chicago. He wrote to Joel Smith,

It has cost us many hours of experiment to secure sufficient firmness even with the iron gooseneck, but substituted in place of it a heavy steel bar extending at right angles to the direction of the neck, and long enough to allow the carriage to move under it. . . . The last machine has a ratchet . . . [so that the] carriage can easily be moved. . . . We think we are about ready to commence work in good earnest, but since we have gone so far here, it will be best for us to work the problem before we attempt to show others how to do it. There will necessarily be months of experimental work yet.

Hall did not yet make metal stereotypes with the machine, but by November, 1892, Arthur Jewell, the school printer, was using stiffened paper and turning out many sheets of music. Hall said that



“the young man makes a page copying it from the embossed paper [made on the regular braille machine] in less than an hour. With a perfectly accurate reader to read to him, he would make the page in half an hour. Thus you see it is easy for us to furnish our pupils all the music they can use. Before I am through with this work . . . I will make a complete printing outfit (Braille) for one half of three hundred dollars—less than that I believe.”

From his experiments Hall determined what characteristics a stereotype maker for metal plates should have:

It will write in copper of sufficient thickness to require no backing. The styluses will simply be directed by the fingers upon a keyboard like the Braille writer, while the embossing will be done by the foot. I think I shall make the cell on this machine about the size of the type you use now, but I am somewhat in doubt as to what will be the most desirable size. What gives the quality of seeming softness to the dot as I now print it, is the fact of its being in the shape of an arch, quite broad at the base. Make the cell smaller, and the base must be narrowed with the result of giving the dots a harshness that must be unpleasant to the reader.

The Democratic party triumphed in the November election, and Hall told his friend Smith:

I am thus between the Scylla of harshness and the Charybdis of a large cell, while a little way in front of me is the decapitating axe of a victorious political party. If I can only have time to write my epitaph in Braille upon a metal hard enough to withstand such pressure as our New York Point friends will bring to bear upon it before my head goes under the guillotine, I will take my punishment for voting for Harrison and Fifer [the Republican candidates for president and governor] without a whine or a regret. Seriously, I shall try very hard to perfect this method of printing before I leave this work and I would like your thought about the peculiar soft quality of our print and how much of this we should sacrifice for smallness of cell.

But Hall won his race with the Democratic Party. On the clear, cold, and quiet early morning of January 5, 1893, Hall jumped lightly from the Chicago and Alton train that pulled in Jacksonville. He hurried forward to supervise the unloading of a large wooden box onto a wagon, and climbed up beside the driver. The horses



hauled the rattling vehicle a couple of hundred yards eastward across the railroad tracks and pulled up in the rear of the main building of the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind. The box was unpacked and the contents set up in the printing shop in the basement. In all of this Hall was assisted by Arthur Jewell and John Curtis, the helpers in the shop. Hall threw off his great-coat, and without changing from his usual stiff collar and black frock coat, sat down at the stereotype machine which had been in the box. This model, as Hall had planned it, had at the back a metal frame about fifteen inches square. The machine was mounted on a waist-high pedestal, and extending downward was a single foot pedal. By pressing the keys and stepping on the pedal, the dots of the braille letters were impressed on a thin brass sheet held in the upright frame. The resulting embossed plate was put in a hand press, a dampened piece of paper was placed over the plate, pressure was applied, and the braille characters were transferred to the paper. Thousands of copies could be made—no fuss, no muss, no type, no hot lead. Hall put a plate in the carriage and tapped out the four lines of the first verse of the hymn, "Blest be the Tie That Binds."

The Hall stereotyper was first exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair where workers with the blind saw its great possibilities, and soon other schools and printing shops had the machine. Superintendent John T. Sibley of the Missouri School for the Blind expressed the general feeling:

After nearly a year's work with the stereotyper, I am led to believe that, as far as the education of the blind is concerned, this invention is the most important of the century, if we except the invention of the point system by Louis Braille. These two form the immovable pillars upon which the future education of the blind must rest. When the value of both is well understood by all, printing embossed matter will be carried on so rapidly and so economically that libraries will grow and flourish like vegetation under a tropical sun.

As time went on, changes were made in the stereotyper; its frame was made heavier and more rugged, and it was motorized. Harrison and Seifried made the first machines, but later their manufacture was made under the supervision of the Howe Memorial Press and the American Printing House for the Blind. Today, most books for the blind are printed from plates made on stereotypers following the principles of Hall's machine. At one point about twenty schools

owned stereotypers and printed their own books and other school material. Gradually they dropped this activity, and even the Illinois school disbanded its printing shop in 1965. In 1970 only one school for the blind had a printing shop associated with it—Howe Press of Perkins School for the Blind. The printing needs of the others were met mainly by the Braille Institute of America, Cloverbrook Printing House, National Braille Press, and the American Printing House for the Blind, with the last, because of its Congressional subsidy, producing the most material. At the American Printing House, while the basic principle of making stereotypes directly on metal is still retained, the embossing process itself has become computerized, and the stereotyper is activated by a set of punched cards carrying the braille symbols, complete instructions for abbreviations, page numbers, margins, and so on. The cards are made by a magnetic tape to which the information is fed electronically by an earlier set of cards punched by an operator. The entire process was set up by the International Business Machines Corporation. In the tradition of not making a profit from appliances for the blind, no charge for the equipment was made, and the installation was maintained without charge for five years. For simple copying of books, the making of class outlines, examination papers, and other school material, an electronic machine made by the 3M Company has come into wide use.

Hall's printing shop, with its ink print and braille presses, its stereotyper, and another Hall invention, a map maker (a simple machine, operated by foot power, by which dots and other symbols used on embossed maps could be made), was first located in a basement room in the main building, but later was moved to a sturdy brick building. A succession of able printers and braillists served in the shop, including Arthur Jewell, and Louis W. Rodenberg, the latter well-known internationally for his creative work in developing a uniform braille music code. Many students were also employed in the shop at various times. Not only was printing done for the school itself, but the products, particularly music, were sold to other schools in the United States and abroad. We will have more to say about these matters, but for the moment we shall take a look at one last contribution that Hall made to the education of the blind through the promotion of braille as the standard print.

Hall's writer and stereotyper operated so efficiently that they provided a strong argument for the use of braille. In 1909, however, there was an effort to confirm New York point as the standard for the education of the blind in the schools of the city. Advocates of braille understood that the decision of so large an educational unit

as New York City would strongly influence the rest of the United States. Although Hall had long been out of active work with the blind, he joined with John B. Curtis, his protégé, who was the head of education for the blind in the Chicago public schools, George W. Jones, the current superintendent of the Illinois School for the Blind (the name had been changed by the legislature in 1906), and Arthur Jewell in presenting the case for the adoption of braille before the school authorities. Two formal hearings were held in April and May, 1909, and Hall testified at both, speaking at length and explaining why he had introduced braille as the standard at the Illinois school rather than New York point. He also told why he had made his writing and stereotyping machines so that they would use braille. Curtis, Jones, and Jewell spoke about the ease with which children learned braille and pointed out that there were a large number of books and thousands of pieces of music available through the presses of schools for the blind and the American Printing House for the Blind. They emphasized that because the Hall stereotyper was so simple to operate, reading material and music could be produced cheaply and that already Hall's machines were used successfully in such large state schools as those of Illinois, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Missouri, and in the public schools of Chicago.

The New York point advocates fought back savagely, even accusing Hall of favoring braille because he would profit if his machines were used. Hall indignantly denied that he had profited personally, and explained that he had no patent on the machines and that he had not tried to patent them because his only interest was in helping the blind. The upshot of the hearings was that New York City adopted braille for its blind children. Frank Hall, his braille writer and his stereotyper "had stemmed the tide of New York Point, and by supporting the Braille principle, opened the way to its universal victory."

Frank Hall's writing machine, his stereotyper, and his map making machine are his greatest contributions to the education of the blind and according to E. E. Allen, place him among ten most important leaders of all time, but he was also a most efficient and selfless superintendent of the Illinois school, and in the next chapter we shall take a look at his further work.



## Chapter Five

# Years of Transition, 1890-1920

The coming of Frank Hall to the superintendency of the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind began a period of change that was characterized by the leadership of men, who, like Bacon and Rhoads, were professional educators, but, unlike them, except for two, had no previous experience as teachers of the blind.

Hall, as we noted, had long been a school teacher and administrator. His successor, William F. Short, a Methodist clergyman, had been president of the Illinois Female College (later MacMurray College), and the next superintendent, Joseph H. Freeman, a friend of Hall and a teacher and public school administrator, had been associated with the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. For short periods, the superintendency of the school was held by George W. Jones, an experienced teacher of the blind in Oregon, Harry C. Montgomery, a Morgan County teacher and school administrator, and Robert W. Woolston, a teacher at the Illinois school.

Another characteristic of the leadership of this period was the continuation of political influence on the appointment of the superintendents. The men who got the job were capable administrators, but the uncertainty of the outcome of elections, and the triumph of the party out of power resulted in short terms and considerable discontinuity of educational programs. There was nothing unique in this situation, because it was common to public institutions, not only in Illinois, but in most states. Among schools for the blind, only the semi-private Perkins Institution, New York Institute, and the Pennsylvania Institution were immune. We shall have much more to say about the matter later in this chapter.

In this period of transition, as we have seen, education for the pupils at the Illinois school, as well as at all other schools, was profoundly affected by the Hall braille writer and the stereotyper. Also, this was a time when the new psychology of education, pioneered in this country by William James, G. Stanley Hall, and John Dewey, and implemented by a host of "progressive" educators was making headway in all schools, including those for the blind. Progressive education seemed to have special relevance for the latter, because it stressed the idea that education was primarily the teaching of boys and girls, not reading, or history, or arithmetic. In the daily life of the pupils in residential schools there were also changes. Instruction



in physical education moved from merely building bodily strength by military drill and gymnastics to participation in track and field, basketball, and wrestling. Music continued to occupy a large amount of the time outside of classes, and emphasis on hand training by the introduction of "sloyd"—woodworking with hand tools—for a time caused a diminution in the teaching of trades like brush and broom making. It had become a custom at the Illinois school for a boy to complete his schooling and then enter the workshop to learn a trade. But with the discontinuance of the workshop in 1905, the broom and brush trades were revived, and additional handicrafts such as weaving rag carpets, knotting horse nets and hammocks were taught to the older boys so that they could become self-supporting. Finally, this period saw a reorganization of the entire Illinois state system of "charitable" and "correctional" institutions.

The Progressive Movement in government during the early decades of the twentieth century placed emphasis on efficiency in the management of state services. When in 1908-1909 an investigation of Illinois mental hospitals and other institutions revealed much mismanagement, and even corruption, the General Assembly created a commission to conduct a searching inquiry into the hospitals, and it was discovered that cruelty and mistreatment of inmates was only too common. While the school for the blind was not investigated, yet, since 1869, it had been under the same state board as other humanitarian and correctional institutions. The legislature in 1912, therefore, included the school in the laws that abolished all boards of trustees and placed the state institutions under a Board of Administration. Within a few years it became clear that there was more than efficiency of management involved in the operation of state agencies dealing with persons, and in 1917 the Department of Public Welfare was created. In it were placed the School for the Deaf, the School for the Blind (the name was changed in 1906), the school for soldiers' orphans, the institution for the feeble minded, all mental hospitals, and certain other agencies. Through all of these changes, the superintendents of the school for the blind continued to carry the heavy responsibility of day-to-day operation.

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As we have seen, Frank Hall came to Jacksonville knowing nothing about the education of the blind, but he did know the universal principles of teaching, and he did know how to administer a school. As was the custom, Mrs. Hall became the matron and supervised the cooks, kitchen helpers, and maids. Hall's son, Clyde, was placed as storekeeper and manager of the dairy herd, gardens, and orchards

and Mrs. Clyde Hall assisted Mrs. Frank Hall in the kitchen and dining room. The accounting and other business affairs were carried on by E. G. Schurmann, who had served under W. S. Phillips. Various-ly called chief clerk and bookkeeper, he handled the finances and carried on correspondence with county authorities concerning the funds which supplied the clothing and transportation expenses of those pupils whom the county judges determined should be provided for at public expense.

Hall made no changes in the teaching staff. He, in fact, relied on it for counsel until he gained experience in the special methods of teaching the blind. The general philosophy of education as developed by Hall's predecessors was that blind children should, so far as possible, have the same kind of academic education as sighted children. Hall thus found the pupils graded into classes approximating those of the public schools, including a three-year high school. One of Hall's first acts was to bring the school for the blind into harmony with the increasing trend in the public schools toward the four-year high school. There was no graduating class in 1892, and the high school program was extended one year. The Phillipses, father and son, also passed on to Hall a program of physical culture and had begun an effort to get the state legislature to provide for a gymnasium. They had also instituted hand-training in the crafts that was intended to improve the ability of students to be self-reliant and prepared to learn trades by which they could provide their livelihood after they left school.

Hall, in his first term as superintendent (1890-1893, second term, 1897-1902) was very largely involved in the development of the braille writer and stereotyper, and also in exhibits on the education of the blind at the Chicago World's Fair. At the same time he did formulate very definite theories about the general education of the blind which were derived from his visits to other schools, his reading of *The Mentor*, *The Outlook for the Blind*, the *Proceedings of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind*, and from his own familiarity with the educational and psychological literature of the time. He was thoroughly imbued with the ideas of psychology and education propounded by such men as Wilhelm Max Wundt in Germany and introduced to the United States by William James of Harvard University and his followers. These ideas, which, among other things, dealt with the psychology of the learning process, were then generically called "sense-perception." They were particularly applied to instruction in United States schools by Edward P. Sheldon, president of the State Normal School of Oswego, New York, and Colonel Francis W. Parker, principal of the

Cook County Normal School in Chicago, Illinois. In part the new educational ideas were also a continuation of the object-teaching of the early nineteenth century European educators, Johann Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel, which emphasizes the discovery by the child himself of the world around him by examining physical objects by means of the five senses.

So it was that Frank Hall, among his first acts as superintendent at the Jacksonville school asked the Illinois General Assembly for a \$3,000 appropriation with which to purchase natural history specimens, "philosophical apparatus [globes, balances, thermometers, and so on that could be used in teaching science], as well as the purchase of typewriters and braille writers." In discussing the need for objects which the pupils could touch, he commented that perception by vision was analytic while perception by touch was synthetic, and that it was necessary to have "special methods of instruction for those whose knowledge of form must be obtained by the tactile sense." In this connection Hall also pointed out that the "word method" of learning to read was "psychologically incorrect if the pupil who reads by touch cannot perceive the word as a whole until he has observed the parts of which the word is composed." Hall drew the conclusion that a blind child must develop the practice of "seeing with the mind's eye" to a greater extent than a sighted child, because the former must depend on verbal description. But Hall realized that this perceptive power, this ability to visualize from verbal description, depended heavily on experience with actual objects, so that verbal description would have concrete meaning. Hall concluded, "If our line of reasoning is correct, every school for the blind should be equipped with a very large and varied collection of objects of nature and art. The rule is not 'hands off, but hands on'." It was Hall's observation that blind pupils were inclined to spend too much time in purely mental processes and introspection, and too little time in bodily movements and in coming into contact with the material thing of the outer world. In institutional life the way to correct this tendency was to take the pupils outside as much as possible and to bring as much as possible of the outer world into the institution.

For these reasons Hall made special efforts to get speakers and entertainers to speak at chapel exercises, at Sunday afternoon Bible classes, and at other occasions. Among them, in 1899-1900, were Alfred Baylis, the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois; Mrs. Baylis, who described "Life in Brook and Bayou"; Murat Halstead, journalist and lecturer, who spoke on "Dewey and the Philippines"; Jane Addams of the famous Hull House of Chicago, who



talked about her visit with Leo Tolstoy, the author of *War and Peace*; Dr. William O. Krohn, a psychologist; and Booker T. Washington, Edward Everett Hale and other nationally known persons. Hall also enlisted the interest of Jacksonville citizens who had traveled abroad, or had especial knowledge of particular subjects. One of the men who was most called upon was Samuel W. Nichols, the editor of the *Jacksonville Journal*. Sam Nichols was a one-man youth organization who saw that every child in the community had a merry Christmas by providing treats of candy and fruit. He took the boys and girls on picnics and trolley rides, and eventually purchased a tract of land and gave it to the city as a public park. Today the Samuel W. Nichols Christmas Fund is still sponsored by the *Jacksonville Journal*, and Nichols Park provides playgrounds, swimming pool, and other facilities. It is the site of many picnics for the pupils of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School.

Sam Nichols was also a world traveler who made long trips to the far parts of the globe, returning with a bag full of souvenirs and products of the places he visited. Back in Jacksonville he talked about his travels to groups of adults and children. One of his greatest pleasures was to bring his collection of objects to the school for the blind, and at one time or another he talked about his tours of Yosemite National Park, Alaska, and other scenic regions of the West. He journeyed by train through the East, visiting Independence Hall, Mount Vernon, Fort Henry at Baltimore and other historic places. On one occasion he carried a message in braille from the children of the school to President McKinley, and brought back a photograph and a letter of thanks. On Sunday afternoons, Nichols talked about travels and passed around the curios and other objects so that every child could touch and examine them. Hall said that Nichols' travel talks added interest and value to the study of geography. But one small child remembered only how tired and sleepy he became before the afternoon ended!

Superintendent Hall checked on his teachers and called their attention to "sense perception work" by requiring that they report to him on the number and kinds of objects or experiences they provided for their pupils.

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Hall's interest in sense perception and its relation to education was greatly stimulated by his contact with two deaf-blind children who came to the school. One was Jessie Stewart, born June 30, 1901, who contracted cerebro-spinal meningitis at the age of ten months.



The little girl lost her sight and hearing, partially lost the sense of smell and taste, and was so crippled that she did not walk until the age of four. When she was nine years old she was enrolled in the kindergarten, and Mrs. Helen R. Jordan, the teacher, undertook to teach her in addition to the other kindergarteners. Using methods developed originally by Samuel G. Howe with his world-famous pupil Laura Bridgman, and later adopted by Anne Sullivan Macy in the case of Helen Keller, Mrs. Jordan sought to bring Jessie out of her soundless and sightless existence, but it was heart-breakingly slow because the child was so withdrawn. After great effort, Jessie did learn to do simple things, but, for example, it took her three days to string wooden beads without help. A glove was placed on the girl's left hand, and different parts of the glove were designated as letters of the alphabet. Since Jessie was passionately attached to her doll, it was decided that an effort would be made to teach her that word. By manually pressing Jessie's right hand to the proper places on the glove hundreds of times, "finally she spelled the word and reached for the doll. But she made no effort to spell the word herself. Other efforts to interest her had little result, and she couldn't get the idea of play. She resisted being taken from her chair and her doll." The child, however, did learn three braille words, and after a year's work she responded to manual commands to stand, sit, rock, and sometimes she could select the right objects when the words cat, doll, squirrel, and ball were spelled.

Jessie was at the school for two years, but made little progress, and she died of scarlet fever during her second year. Hall reflecting on her case, said that the child was not educable because of her sense perception which was so narrow. He pointed out that the only deaf-blind children that had been successfully educated had at least the senses of taste and smell, as well as that of touch.

Hall's conclusion seems to have been justified in the light of the great success Mrs. Jordan had in teaching the second deaf-blind girl, Emma Kubicek, born on January 1, 1896. She, too, had cerebro-spinal meningitis, but it came at the age of three, and left her unable to see, hear, or speak, although there were no other physical handicaps. She was brought to Jacksonville in October, 1901, when she was nearly six years old.

Since Mrs. Jordan had already had a year's experience with Jessie Stewart, Emma was also placed in Mrs. Jordan's care. From the beginning, as Hall said, the child "exhibited great interest in everything with which she came in contact, and learned to string beads in one lesson, then took them off and threw them about the room. She was made to pick them up but continued to throw the

beads about as well as destroy other toys." But after two weeks Emma desisted and became genuinely interested in learning to communicate with her teacher. Mrs. Jordan reported that Emma learned to spell 'ball' in two weeks, then 'doll' and in a month could distinguish between the two when spelled on her hand. She found a flatiron among her toys and quickly learned to use it (cold) and spell it. Emma soon found out that all objects have names and not only learned to spell manually, but learned the braille for the objects.

Before the year was out the little girl began to enjoy marching with other children in the gymnasium and learned to use the braille writer. Mrs. Jordan said that in these ways and in others Emma became an interesting and promising pupil.

Emma Kubicek continued to make rapid progress. In the seven years she lived at the school she attracted national attention, and many looked upon her as another Helen Keller. Emma's picture and that of Mrs. Jordan, along with the story of her accomplishments, appeared in the newspapers of Chicago, Springfield, and St. Louis and in several national magazines. In the Historical Room of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School are the clippings of these accounts as well as pictures and other material collected by Mrs. Jordan. In 1905 the Illinois General Assembly made a special appropriation for the expense of teaching Emma, and thus Mrs. Jordan, who was also conducting her regular kindergarten class of thirty children, was relieved of part of her burden. By 1906 Emma had been taught to speak a few words, but she had learned to read and write many more in braille and she used a typewriter freely. She had made much progress in sewing and other handiwork, and the physical training she received in the gymnasium improved her posture so that she carried her head up and walked and moved gracefully. She was an outgoing, affectionate child, and her death from pneumonia in 1907 was mourned by the entire school.

Frank Hall's experience with these deaf-blind children, as well as with the blind and partially seeing pupils at the school, led him to develop a theory of the significance of sense perception in all education. As a careful student of the literature of the subject he was familiar with "progressive education," the term applied to the philosophy and methods advocated by John Dewey and his followers. Briefly, the "new education," as Hall called it, held that the child was educated as he was exposed to an increasing number of sense stimuli, progressively more complex as the child's body developed. This was at variance with the "old education," which taught that the child was an incomplete adult who could comprehend ideas and perceive the physical world only incompletely. The old

education held that ideas and physical experiences should not be simplified or presented to the child in order of progressive difficulty or complexity, but that the child be confronted over and over again with the full-blown idea or the concrete object until finally the child became an adult. Then he would grasp the idea in its entirety, and would react to his physical environment in an adult manner.

Hall accepted the new education, noting that John Dewey emphasized the need of the child for first-hand experience with sense perceptions of all kinds. At the same time Hall was concerned that results of sense perception should be the basis for thought and reflection by the child. Out of his personal experience with teaching both blind and sighted children, Hall drew a comparison. The blind child, he said, received only a small part of his material for thought from sense perception but by reflection and training learned to "elaborate it very thoroughly." On the other hand, the sighted child received a large amount of "crude material, but elaborated it very imperfectly." For both blind and sighted children sense perception was needed. The lesson to be learned from this situation was that the blind child needed to receive many more sense experiences, while the sighted child needed to make better use of his reflective powers.

Essentially there was little change in Hall's educational philosophy under the administrations of his successors until the post-World War I period when progressive education, which had come to be called "life-centered education," was generally applied. William F. Short, who was superintendent in 1892-1896, between Hall's two terms, was a Methodist clergyman who had had administrative experience as president of Illinois Female College when that institution was a preparatory school with some advanced work comparable, in part, to that of a modern junior college. Short had had little experience in teaching young sighted persons, and none at all with the blind. His only contribution to the academic program was the idea that the objective of education should be moral, and that "habits of order, punctuality, respect, duty, right and reverence are of incalculable value in everyday life, and essential to good citizenship." Short felt that it was very necessary that this be done by teachers of the blind, because many children came to the school with "very incorrect ideas on these matters—often with vicious tendencies strongly developed requiring constant and firm description to maintain becoming deportment. An education that comprises only a reasonable understanding of these matters of moral conduct, unaccompanied by no more than a meager intel-



lectual equipment, insures better promise of satisfactory citizenship that the richest mental and manual acquisitions without them."

At the same time Short did support the academic work of the school, although he spoke of it in terms of traditional pedagogy: "The cultivation of the intellectual faculties is the primary aim of the establishment of all schools not purely technical or professional in their character. It is education for education's sake; for the conscious pleasure and strength that comes from every increment of knowledge." This concept of education was especially important with respect to the blind, enabling to those who followed it because most of the blind, "by reason of their lowly station in life, being debarred the many sources of pleasure and preferment enjoyed by the seeing [it was necessary] to open the portals of knowledge before them, and to conduct them over the ever-widening fields of truth."

It seems probable that the Reverend Dr. Short made little impact on the educational program of the school because his term was brief. Hall, with his strong beliefs and vigorous leadership, resumed the superintendency in 1897. After five more years Hall decided that the political pressures on him to appoint institutional workers were more than he could resist and still do a competent job as superintendent, and he resigned his post.

He was succeeded by Captain Joseph H. Freeman, a friend whom Hall had known during his boyhood in Maine. The two men were in the army together, both attended Bates College, both came to Illinois, and both served in the Aurora schools. Freeman succeeded Hall as superintendent of schools when the latter went to Sugar Grove, and in 1886 Freeman entered state politics as deputy state superintendent of public instruction. He acted as superintendent for a short time, also. Freeman was active in educational organizations, and served a term as president of the Illinois State Teachers Association. The captain continued Hall's policies and stated his position by quoting John Dewey: "The ultimate problem of all education is to coordinate the psychological and sociological factors." Freeman also echoed Hall in saying that blind students were under a handicap because of narrow sense perception, but that there were some compensations because of the exercise of the imaginative faculty. Freeman insisted that teachers must lead the blind so that the latter would realize "social ends." He said that this was difficult, but could be achieved through "musical instruction, physical culture, manual training, and preparation for useful occupations." Both Short and Freeman gave strong support to the printing shop and encouraged the enlargement of reading material in braille.



Freeman, who had independent financial resources, was never completely happy as superintendent because, as he grew older the problems of discipline, and the continuous presence of noisy children distressed him. One former student, as he looked back on his experiences, said that although both Hall and Freeman were competent men, the former was always sorry to see the children go home for vacations, but Freeman was always sorry to see them come back! Captain Freeman left office in 1907 and retired to private life.

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Little change was made in the fundamental philosophy of education until the 1920's, but standards of teaching were generally as high as those of the public schools. By 1920 or so most teachers were high school graduates with varying amounts of training in a normal school or teachers college, and a few had earned baccalaureate degrees. It was, however, recognized early that a high expertise was necessary for teaching the kindergarten and primary grades, and experienced teachers with special training in the field were provided. Miss Margaret Taylor, a teacher of kindergarten in 1891, was described by Superintendent Hall as a

most enthusiastic teacher. She is thoroughly familiar with all the work of the kindergarten, having enjoyed excellent advantages as a pupil, supplemented by several years experience as a teacher of the blind. She was employed for nearly three years in the Royal Normal College, London, England, and has been connected with this institution (the Illinois school) for nearly two years. She uniformly attracts the favorable attention of visitors to the work of the kindergarten and never fails to impress upon the minds of all observers the importance of these methods.

In 1896, the current teacher in the kindergarten, Miss Mary Firmin, was sent by the board of trustees to visit Eastern schools.

The methods of Friedrich Froebel were widely adopted in the kindergartens of the United States, and were first applied to the teaching of the blind by the Ohio State Institution for the Education of the Blind in 1879. In general, the Froebel system was based on the idea that the child learned about the world in which he lived through the development of all the senses, particularly through self-expression and investigation of the objects around him. Therefore there was emphasis on the use of blocks, wooden beads, crayons,

and other materials which the child could use himself to enlarge his means of reacting to his daily experiences.

One of the tenets of Froebel teaching was that there was unity in all nature, and that all forms could be expressed by variations and combinations of the shapes of the sphere, the cylinder, and the cube. The parallels between these shapes and other objects were a means of teaching kindergartens how to compare and contrast the shapes of natural and man-made objects. The Illinois school sought to use this medium, but with indifferent success, because the supplier of the apparatus sent it in such bad order. The teacher, Mary R. Bayly, wrote to the E. Steiger Company,

The box No. 11, 2nd gift, is incomplete, having no cross-beam for the supports—no holes in the lid for same—no small sticks corresponding with the holes in the cubes for showing the different positions and variety of forms. All the spheres of the lot are imperfect from having a hole or a flaw made by the machine used in making them, and they are all too small to correspond with the other two forms (the cube and cylinder) which are of the same size, each with the other. It is very important that these three forms be of the same size, and more especially when they are to be studied and compared through the sense of touch, hence we do not want them unless they are of uniform size.

We do not know if the faulty material was replaced, nor do we find any further mention of this rather complex subject.

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Under the superintendents of the 1890's and the early twentieth century, and in fact, continuing down to the present time, the kindergarten and primary departments of the school were especially strong, and the age at which pupils were admitted was lowered so that five-year-olds, and an occasional four-year-old, were admitted, although children might be as old as nine or ten, depending generally on the age at which parents were willing to let their children leave home.

Just as the age of admission to the kindergarten was indefinite, so was that of the admission of those who had been blinded later in childhood, and sent to the Jacksonville institution to complete their education. The teachers and superintendents, who continually strove to make the school like the public schools, found that these children were difficult to place in the graded system. Frank Hall

stated the problem in the following quotation, which also demonstrated his deep compassion for all blind persons ;

Rigidity of grading [classification by grades] is neither desirable nor practicable. . . . If all of our pupils were congenitally blind and were sent to school when six years of age, the problem of grading would be much less complicated. But the almost insurmountable difficulties that confront one who attempts strict classification, nay, the immeasurable harm that will be done by such an attempt long persisted in, will become apparent when it is remembered that some of our pupils who have never seen the light come to us at five or six years of age ; others that were born blind are kept in their homes and led about and waited upon until they are twelve and thirteen years of age and then put in our kindergarten ; that still others have perhaps been neglected—left in a corner with a mouth organ and a drum and have thus passed the early years of their childhood and at ten or twelve years of age come to us with undeveloped limbs and the hands of a child of five ; that some become blind at two, three or four years of age, and that the disease or accident that caused their blindness has left them, not exactly ‘feeble-minded’ as the term is usually interpreted but mentally and physically handicapped for life, that others lose their sight at six, eight, ten, or twelve or fourteen years of age and that some of these come to us as soon as they have recovered from the illness or accident that dooms them to darkness for the remainder of their lives, some with other faculties impaired, and with a degree of courage and optimism that is a rebuke to many of us, others disheartened and depressed because of the deep shadow that has fallen upon them ; that some in middle life are stricken with blindness and plead for admission to the institution—for the opportunity of learning to read with their fingertips and of learning to use their hands in useful occupation. A moment’s view of the facts as they are will not fail to convince even the casual observer that the careful study of individual necessities and the adaptation of the work to individual needs are the especially difficult tasks that confront the education of the blind. Classification and gradation can best be adopted in a small way as the outcome and concomitant of careful individual study and instruction.

The academic curriculum of the Illinois school underwent little change throughout the period covered by this chapter, and it was kept as nearly parallel to that of the public schools as possible.

As we have seen, one of Hall's first acts was to extend the high school from three years to four by omitting the graduation exercises in 1892. An overview of the curriculum as it was in the 1890's was given by Superintendent Short;

### *Kindergarten Department*

Regular kindergarten work

Beginning primary work, including Braille reading, Braille writing, number work and singing

### *Primary Department*

Language, reading, Braille writing and reading, geography, arithmetic, primary science

### *Intermediate Department*

Arithmetic, geography, language, U. S. history, reading: general literature at discretion of teacher, including such works as *Tales from Shakespeare*, *Child's History of England*, *Compendium of American Literature*

### *High School Department*

First year: Algebra, grammar, physical geography, physiology

Second year: Algebra, rhetoric, zoology, and botany

Third year: Geometry (plane), physics, civil government

Fourth year: English and American literature, general history, chemistry

A few years later the curriculum was reorganized by an experienced school principal, Mrs. Louise B. Inglis, who was brought to Jacksonville by Superintendent Freeman. A well-educated woman, Mrs. Inglis was a graduate of Southern Illinois Normal University, and had studied in England and Germany for two years. On her return to Illinois she was employed as principal at Greenville and Charleston. Her husband, Samuel M. Inglis, served as superintendent of public instruction from 1895 until his death in 1898. In 1908, under the direction of Superintendent George W. Jones, Mrs. Inglis, using the course of study recommended by the state superintendent of public instruction revised the curriculum, and reassigned the work to be done in each grade. The plan provided for one year of kindergarten, eight years of grades, and four years of high school, and was described as follows:



*Kindergarten*

Circle songs, games, and stories, gifts, modeling, kindergarten hand work on paper and loom weaving

*Grades*

Braille reading and writing, using slates and Hall Braille writers, language, spelling, grammar, literature, arithmetic, algebra, history, geography, elementary science, manual training, morals and manners, physical education

*High School*

Freshman: Rhetoric, algebra, physiology, English history

Sophomore: Physical geography, Greek and Roman history, physics, algebra, spelling, American literature

Junior: English literature, medieval and modern history, commercial law, German, geometry

Senior: German, psychology, economics, Latin

The record is not clear, but it is probable that this curricular reform also included a departmental organization for the high school. Until 1906 or 1908, the high school subjects were taught to separate boy and girl classes—freshman boys in one class, freshman girls in another, etc.—and the teacher of each class taught all the subjects much as was done in the elementary grades. Now, however, teachers were appointed to teach particular subjects to all pupils.

From time to time, additions and deletions were made in the academic program, and in 1922 Managing Officer Robert W. Woolston said that in the kindergarten, “a great deal of Montessori methods and materials were used.” (Maria Montessori was an Italian physician and educator who advocated free play for small children, using games and dances to develop coordination, and drawing, finger painting, paper and scissor work, clay modeling, and so on to provide sense perception.) For the five, six, and seven-year-olds in the kindergarten, Woolston said, there were circle games, gift making, modeling, handwork on and with paper, loom weaving, braille alphabet, and beginning writing and reading of braille.

In the elementary school—grades one to eight—braille reading and writing continued, using slates and Hall writers, and the subjects of language, spelling, grammar, literature, algebra, history, geography, elementary science, manual training, physical education, and morals and manners were taught.

Fewer courses were taught in the high school, and the succession

was regularized, following developments that had taken place in the curriculum of public high schools. There was also provision for students to elect a few courses particularly in history, languages (French or Latin), and in literature. Through all four years pupils took typing. One of the reasons for this curriculum was that an increasing number of pupils hoped to enter college, and needed to take language, mathematics, and science to meet entrance requirements, but this is a subject that will be discussed in a later chapter.

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The other aspects of the curriculum—manual training, music, and physical development—also went through significant changes in the period from 1890 to 1920. We have noted that in the 1880's emphasis on teaching hand trades—broom and brush making, chair caning, etc.—had declined because it was felt that since a training workshop was maintained on the campus, the learning of trades should be postponed until after graduation or other termination of school attendance. This philosophy was continued until 1905 when the workshop was discontinued. It was considered that children should learn to use their hands (also advocated in schools for the seeing), and thereafter "manual training" was emphasized. Boys were taught woodworking, basketry, and chair caning. Both boys and girls learned to make fly nets for horses. In 1891, Miss Anna Darnell, a teacher, was sent to the Iowa school for the blind to learn how to make fly nets and net hammocks for people to use on their porches and in their yards for relaxing and resting in the heat of summer. This required considerable manual dexterity, and both boys and girls learned the skill. Girls also continued to learn sewing, embroidery, knitting, and "domestic science," including cooking. In 1906 a room in the girl's cottage was outfitted with a stove, tables, cupboards, etc. The program was experimental and was not put on a permanent basis for many years.

In the 1890's the most important development in manual training was "sloyd"—the construction of objects of wood, using hand tools such as planes, saws, knives, hammers, awls, and rasps. It was a system that had developed in Sweden, spread to the rest of Europe, and was widely adopted in United States schools. The Perkins Institution had introduced an extensive system, calling it "American sloyd." After a few years the term "sloyd" was dropped, but the teaching of woodworking in school shops continued. In 1892 Hall considered introducing sloyd, but finally decided that the budget would not permit the salary of an additional teacher. Finally, in 1901 he employed Miss Anna Lagergren, and by 1904 seventy boys

were engaged for an hour or two a day in classwork, producing such objects as spice cabinets, taborets, flowerpot stands, tool racks, checker boards, picture frames, trays, glove boxes, and pen trays. Woodworking remains an important part of manual training, augmented in the 1940's by instruction in the use of power tools.

The workshop for training men in broom making, brush making, chair caning, and so on continued to be a part of the operation of the Illinois school. In 1894 a new brick building was occupied. It was sixty feet square, three stories high, and was equipped with the most modern machines. At about the same time the state of Illinois provided a large Industrial Home for the Blind in Chicago. It was a sheltered workshop, and some of the men who had been kept at work in the shop in Jacksonville were transferred to Chicago, thus making room for more apprentices in Jacksonville. In 1905 the workshop for adult men was discontinued, and they were moved to the Industrial Home. The move was welcomed by the school because it had always been difficult to maintain the shop with adult students along with the school and its much younger pupils.

After the removal of the workshop for adults, greater emphasis was placed on vocational preparation. In addition to the usual brush and broom making, chair caning, etc., piano tuning was promoted, and about twenty young men were in training. The course was quite complete, including piano repair as well as tuning. Various piano manufacturers supplied instructional material, and in 1904, the instructor, a blind man, built a piano from parts supplied by the makers. Students completing the piano tuning course could either go into business for themselves or they could get jobs with the piano manufacturers, of which there were many in Illinois, particularly in Chicago.

Frank Hall, always appliance minded, was much interested in typing and stenography as a vocation for graduates. In 1892 the school owned two Hammond, three Remington, and ten Merritt typewriters, and regular instruction was given. Hall also used the phonograph (or gramophone as it was sometimes called), operated by a person speaking into the horn or trumpet. A needle registered the sounds acoustically on a revolving hard rubber or composition cylinder. The same needle was used to play back the sound of the voice using the same horn as an amplifier. Hall himself dictated much of his correspondence on the phonograph, and a student transcribed it on the typewriter. To show that blind persons could be good typists, Hall rubber-stamped his letters, "Written from dictation by a pupil in the Illinois Institution for the Education of

the Blind," and the pupil signed his name. Hall and some of the pupil-typists also experimented with a machine called a stenograph that was devised by the United States Stenograph Company of St. Louis, but they did not find it to be very successful. (No description of the machine is available.)

Another experiment, the teaching of telegraphy, was also made. In connection with this, Hall hoped to use the stenograph. He wrote to the company;

I can only say that our faith in the stenograph for the purpose for which it was designed is not very strong. I mean so far as the blind are concerned. If the machine could be perfected, I believe we could make use of it in connection with telegraphy to our great advantage. The one we have is usually out of order, but we shall give it a trial this year, as suggested above. It is certainly not impossible for a blind boy to write with the perfected instrument without abbreviating, as rapidly as the best operator can send.

Thus there were insoluble problems in connection with the teaching of telegraphy, and it never became a part of the vocational program.

Typing and the use of the dictating machine have continued to be taught, and over the years a number of pupils, especially girls, have secured and held positions as secretaries and typists. Another career, that of therapeutic body massage, which seemed to offer a promise of employment was also tried. It was well known that blind persons in Japan monopolized the business of body massage, and it was hoped that it might be introduced into the United States. Through the cooperation of Dr. Frank B. Norbury, who operated Maplewood Sanitarium for the mentally ill in Jacksonville, instruction was given in human anatomy and the methods of massage. Several pupils took the course and one of them did secure a job, but the unwillingness of hospitals and doctors to employ blind persons proved too large an obstacle to overcome, and the experiment was abandoned.

On the whole, employment of the graduates of the school remained somewhat unsatisfactory until positive steps were taken by the state in the 1930's. Nevertheless, many graduates did find places for themselves in factories and offices, in private business or trades, and in music as teachers, church organists, and performers. On the matter of employment, Superintendent H. C. Montgomery wrote in 1914, "It is gratifying to meet so many graduates who are gainfully employed."



The music department continued to play an important part in the school program during the period 1890-1920. Five or six teachers were employed, and the attempt to give an air of the conservatory was maintained. In 1892 Hall reported that there were "115 pupils studying piano, fifty-two, violin, and ten, the pipe organ, and several each on violincello, viola, cornet, piccolo, French Horn, euphonium and other instruments. Thirty-five were studying harmony, and twenty-five were taking voice lessons." Hall went on to say that the students of

good musical ability, and [who] give promise of being able, either wholly or in part, to become self-supporting through their skill as teachers or performers are given the most thorough drill possible, continuing through a period of many years; while those who simply desire this as an accomplishment that will in a degree brighten their dark lives and be a means of enjoyment to them and to their friends, are given less time in this department and less extensive instruction. Those who, after patient trial are found altogether lacking in musical ability, are dropped from the music classes. In every case the pupil is given the benefit of any doubt that may exist in the minds of his teachers, as to how little or how much latent musical skill he may possess.

Several thousand dollars a year were spent on the purchase and repair of musical instruments, the purchase of music, and the maintenance of the pipe organ in the chapel. In 1893 the music department awarded its first diploma to a graduate. He was Arthur E. Ananet, who later became a teacher at the Minnesota Institution for the Blind.

Little change took place in the music program until about 1920, when the teaching of music to all children in the elementary grades was introduced, using the methods of the public schools, which for two decades had systematically taught the basics of music, using a graded series of books. The school for the blind adopted the series by Eleanor Smith, and printed it in braille. The details are not clear, but it seems that the teaching of what was generally called "public school music" was in the hands of the classroom teachers. It was not until the 1930's that teaching of graded music became the duty of the members of the music department. Those pupils that were considered to have musical ability received special instruction. Usually musical talent was discovered when children began the study of piano; and all of them did have the opportunity to learn to play. As in the past, work in harmony, theory, voice culture, and

orchestral instruments was given to those who specialized in music.

Some students, considered as having great ability, after graduation came back for a further year or two of study, and helped out as instructors of beginning students. While the practice of giving special diplomas in music was dropped, advanced students occasionally gave the equivalent of a graduation recital, and received a special certificate.

The musical content of the instruction at the school was indicated by the remark of one superintendent, "that only the best music was performed." By this he meant that works of the period from Bach to Brahms were taught and performed, much as they were in music departments in schools and conservatories for the seeing. Musical programs were heavily weighted in favor of European musicians, but an occasional piece by such Americans as Dudley Buck, Arthur Whiting, and other contemporary musicians was performed. It was customary, as it had been in the past, and as it still continues in the 1970's, for the music department to give performances at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, at graduation, and at a special spring concert. Typical of the secular musical programs is the one of May 1, 1914:

Friday, May 1, 1914, Miss Lillian Smith, director—

Orchestra (a)	Marche Militaire.....	Schubert
(b)	Barcarolle (from Tales of Hoffman).....	Offenbach
Piano Solo	Concerto, Op. 25 (3d movement) .....	Mendelssohn
	Ruth Needel	
	Orchestral parts on organ	
Vocal Solo	In The Calmness of a Vision .....	Gounod
	(Waltz song from Romeo and Juliet)	
	Sophia Morris	
Violin Solo (a)	Cavatina .....	Raff
(b)	Morris Dance.....	German
	Karl Hunter	
Organ Solo	At Evening.....	Buck
	Fred Foster	
Vocal Solo	My Heart at Thy Sweet Voice .....	Saint-Saens

	(from Samson and Delilah)	
	Maude Varley	
Violin Solo	Faust Waltz.....	Gounod-Wichtl
	Edwin Klein	
Vocal Solo	Chanson du Toreador.....	Bizet
	(from Carmen)	
	Ralph Piper	
Piano Solo	Valse, Op. 34, No. 1.....	Moszkowsk
Senior Chorus (a)	I Waited for the Lord.....	Mendelssohn
	(from Hymn of Praise)	
	(b) Wedding March.....	Cowen
	(from Rose Maiden)	
	(c) The Lost Chord.....	Sullivan

It will be observed that the program was largely made up of nineteenth century romantic pieces, including the "Marche Militaire" and "The Lost Chord," which today in 1970 are considered as sentimental war horses, but were still fresh in 1914, and certainly had an appeal for young and old.

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We have noted that a drive for a gymnasium had been begun by W. S. Phillips, but it was not until 1894 that the legislature appropriated \$10,000 for a building. It was completed in about a year, and an open house was held on January 23, 1896. Pupils began to use the building immediately after, and Superintendent Short said that had the members of the legislature been present and seen the expressions of delight on the faces of the pupils, they would have said, "The appropriation was well made." The gymnasium building was "one of beauty, being built in the Medieval style, after the architecture of the castles of the old world." It was a style much used in the last part of the nineteenth century. A number of such castellated structures were also built at other Illinois institutions. The red brick building was fifty by one hundred feet overall, and behind two dressing rooms that were to the right and left of the entrance was "a large drill room, free of all obstruction, 48 x 78 feet, and 25 feet in height. Extending the width of the building [over the dressing rooms] was a gallery seating 100 spectators."

Patterned after the best of such gymnasiums at other schools, it had a hard maple floor, suitable for marching and other gymnastic activities, and was equipped with a "complete supply of the most ap-

proved apparatus: wands, dumbbells, Indian clubs, vaulting horses, parallel bars, horizontal bars, adjustable ladders, rope ladders, swinging rings, and weight pulls." It was probably no exaggeration when it was said that the gymnasium was "the most beautiful, commodious, and best equipped of any institution for the education of the blind in our country." The basis of the work carried on in the new building was "Swedish gymnastics" and made use of the vaulting horses, parallel bars, etc. But there was also much drill and precision exercise using Indian clubs, wands, and dumbbells like that carried on in schools for the seeing. By 1920 the pupils were also playing vigorous games; running relays, ball games (basketball was early introduced and was played by the partially sighted pupils), and dancing for both boys and girls were also a part of the program. Gymnasium activities, however, had no place in the school day, but were confined to the late afternoon and evening hours. Three or four days a week, periods of thirty minutes were devoted to exercise in the gymnasium. Beginning in 1906 and continuing until after the second world war, an annual gymnasium exhibition was held for the entertainment of the pupils and friends of the school. More will be said about such occasions in the next chapter.

Superintendent Hall advocated physical culture, because he thought that exercise was especially beneficial to blind children, and in 1900 a trained director, W. A. Crippen, was employed. The latter used standardized anthropometric charts, and checked the weight and strength of all pupils. Thus defects and abnormalities were caught, and corrective measures were taken. When Mr. Crippen died in 1902 Hall named a young man who had assisted him—D. M. Doran, the boys' supervisor, with the provision that he take a summer course at Harvard University. In 1906 Harold G. Powell, a graduate of Temple College of Philadelphia Gymnasium School was secured. Later other equally qualified instructors were employed.

The gymnasium, while used for remedial physical education, was also the center for recreational activities. For example, in 1904, "as a recreation and a remedy to overcome natural awkwardness," dancing was encouraged—one evening a week for boys, and another for girls, with music supplied by pupil orchestras. Under the direction of the physical education teacher, the boys and girls were taken on long walks, and they were especially instructed to do deep breathing in order to get the most out of the outdoor exercise. In the winter there were ice skating parties.

The early twentieth century was a period in which there was



increased interest in athletics of all kinds. High schools, private preparatory schools, and colleges developed interschool competition in sports, particularly football, baseball, and track and field. With the usual tendency of schools for the blind to adopt from schools for the sighted whatever could be applied to their situation, John D. Gregory, the athletic director of the Kentucky Institution for the Blind, introduced football and track, and his teams played against local schools for the sighted. At the Illinois school, track and field sports were instituted in 1907 by Superintendent George W. Jones, who had experience with blind youths as a teacher at the Oregon School for the Blind. Jones said,

Whatever may be said of the value of athletics for the seeing may be repeated with increased emphasis for the blind. The blind have few opportunities to exhibit their best physical effort. . . . The blind child has been excluded [from active sports] very much to his physical and moral disadvantage. He is forced into sedentary habits; he becomes a dreamer giving his days to introspection. He ceases to be an actor and his life is in danger of being a failure.

For these reasons Jones affiliated the school with the National Athletic Association of Schools for the Blind, and he coached a team for the first track meet held on May 16, 1908. Meets were held at each school on the same day, and the time for each race or the height or distance of each field event was sent into a central point by telegram. The Illinois school won the contest by scoring thirty and a half points against thirteen and a half by the Pennsylvania Institution for the Education of the Blind. It was not until after the second world war that interschool athletic competition flourished and the teams were taken by bus to compete with each other.

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The Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind was renamed the Illinois School for the Blind in 1906 by an act of the legislature. As we know, superintendents had long been disturbed by the difficulty of making it clear to the public that the institution was wholly educational in nature, and was not an asylum for the indigent blind of all ages. To affirm this, schools for the blind in other states had been placed under boards of education. In Illinois there was an office of superintendent of public instruction, but his authority in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was limited

to the collecting of statistics and setting standards. It was not until state aid for schools became extensive in the 1930's that his authority was enlarged. From the founding of the Institution for the Education of the Blind in 1849, it had been considered that, in part, it was for the care and education of blind children and young people who unfortunately could not be educated in the public schools, and increasingly the emphasis was on "education." We have noted earlier that under Rhoads and his successors the school was as near like those for sighted pupils as possible. But, with the full recognition of the dual nature of the institution, it had been classed with other charitable agencies. Although it retained its own board of trustees, as did all state institutions, after 1869 it was supervised by the Board of Public Charities, whose powers, as we have noted, were limited. In 1909, partly because of scandals of mismanagement and mistreatment of inmates of state mental hospitals, the General Assembly, after an investigation, and with concurrence of the Board of Public Charities, abolished the Board of Charities, and created a new Charities Commission to inspect, investigate, and make recommendations to the legislature. The actual administration of the state institutions was put in the hands of a Board of Administration of six members, each receiving a salary. The Board of Administration had the power to appoint and discharge employees (but the civil service laws must be observed), to purchase materials and supplies, "and in every way [had] authority to administer the institutions."

As the Board of Administration took over its responsibilities, it gradually worked out a classification of the institutions under its charge. It recognized the educational nature of the School for the Blind and included it in an "educational group" with the School for the Deaf, the School for Boys at St. Charles, and the School for Girls at Geneva. It was not a very good classification, because the St. Charles and Geneva schools were institutions for the confinement of juvenile delinquents, and thus were correctional in nature, but at least "schools" were recognized as being in a different category from the mental hospitals which comprised the largest group of institutions under the jurisdiction of the Board of Administration.

A further change in the management of state institutions came in 1917. At that time the legislature passed the Administrative Code Act which reorganized those departments of the state government which were under the jurisdiction of the governor. The Department of Public Welfare was given jurisdiction over the group of institutions including the mental hospitals and the schools, and

the latter were classified as being in the Educational and Residential Service.

In 1906, the legislature, at the urging of Superintendent Freeman and others, including the Alumni Association of the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind, changed the name formally to Illinois School for the Blind. While the change of name made no impact on the program of the school, it was a public and official statement of the character of the institution, and made it easier to avoid being considered an asylum for the unfortunate. The removal of the workshop to the Illinois Industrial Home for the Blind in Chicago, a few years later, contributed further to its image as an educational institution, as did the passage of a compulsory school attendance law in 1905, which, although it did not clearly state so, was interpreted as also applying to the blind. Further, in 1909, at the urging of many people, including the alumni of the School for the Blind, a commission was appointed to "inquire into the condition of the blind." The first meeting was held at Jacksonville, and Superintendent Jones addressed the meeting. As a result of the recommendation of the Commission on the Condition of the Blind, a Department of Visitation to the Blind was established under the Board of Administration by the General Assembly in 1911. Its purpose was to serve adults in their homes, and thus the pressure on the School for the Blind to take in adults was relieved, and its work of teaching children could go on.

One pressing administrative problem, the political appointment of superintendents, and even teachers and workers, continued to plague the school. We have noted the influences that led to the resignation of Joshua Rhoads, the efforts to influence the governor to appoint William S. Phillips, and, most pronounced of all, the forced resignation of Hall, and the naming of Short as superintendent. Political appointments were also made in other states, and the matter was of concern to the American Association of Instructors of the Blind. The evils of such a practice were frequently pointed out by the members and the whole business was heartily condemned. A resolution was passed stating that superintendents should hold office "during good behavior, and so long as they faithfully and successfully performed their duties." One man said that there "should be no difference between schools for the blind and other schools where politics does not enter. Appointments should be made on the basis of experience in educational administration, and familiarity with the problems of teaching the blind." The dismissal of Frank Hall, who was well-known among superintendents because of his braille writer and stereotyper, attracted wide atten-



tion. At the 1896 meeting of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind, the matter was discussed, and Dr. William F. Short felt that, because he was not a professional educator of the blind, he was being personally attacked. He took the floor to say, "I am becoming very impatient of this style of thing. I endured a great deal of it a few years ago because I was a new man. This talk carries an accusation that some great wrong has been done, which I disclaim and deny. As the gentleman has said [referring to the remarks of Judge Henry Phillips, a member of the board of trustees of the Illinois institution] the woods are full of men that can take these institutions, if every one of us should die tomorrow."

There *was* much to be said in favor of the spoils system from the standpoint of government under a system of political parties, but at the same time there was also a growing recognition by governors of states and party bosses that the party in power should not only have the loaves and fishes of political control, but if the party wished to continue to enjoy them, it must govern responsibly. This meant that appointees to superintendencies, (at least it was true in Illinois) should be capable and honest men. Hall himself was a political appointee, and so were all the superintendents through Robert W. Woolston. Even his successors down to the present do not enjoy civil service status, and are thus subject to removal without recourse to any appeal board.

So long as the political system existed, superintendents had to operate within it, if they were to be free to devote their attention to the larger function of educating the blind. Hall was really the only superintendent who did not work within the system. He felt that the educational program of the school would be so severely handicapped by political considerations that he preferred to resign. At the same time it must be remembered that this was not his sole reason for leaving his post, and maybe it was not the most important one. His life-long interest in agriculture was as great as his concern for school teaching. When the chance to devote his talents as a teacher to the advancement of agriculture arose, he seized the opportunity that opened up to him with the Farmer's Institutes.

Hall's successors at the Illinois school were also capable men. Captain Freeman had had large experience, not only in school administration, but in the conduct of business, and Jones had been the head of the Oregon School for the Blind. He also was a man of affairs, and when he resigned he devoted his attention to his ranching and other businesses in California. In fact, Jones was appointed by Governor Deneen after a search for a man experienced in the



education of the blind. Under both Freeman and Jones the interests of the school were significantly advanced, and neither man made any public statement that their conduct of office was adversely affected by political considerations. The greatest possibility of political influence was when party control over the legislature and the governorship changed. Such an upheaval took place when the Democrats succeeded the Republicans in 1896, and Hall was asked to resign in favor of Short. A similar change took place in 1913 when Governor Edward F. Dunne, a Democrat, took office, replacing Governor Deneen, a Republican. At this time Robert W. Woolston, who had been appointed when Jones left, was replaced by H. C. Montgomery, a teacher and school administrator, who when he was named, was superintendent of schools in Morgan County (the county in which Jacksonville is located).

Woolston was the first teacher at the Illinois school to be elevated to the superintendency. He was a graduate of Wheaton College in Illinois, and came to Jacksonville as an assistant teacher in the high school. Under Jones, he also served as assistant superintendent.

In 1917, the political wheel turned again, and Montgomery was out. To replace him the Board of Administration turned to Woolston, who, during Montgomery's tenure had taught public school in Iowa. The political heat was subsiding by this time, and the board wanted an experienced man. Another reason for the selection of Woolston was that the board had adopted a policy of promoting people from the ranks rather than bringing in untried people.

Little advance in the educational program of the school took place in either Montgomery's term or in Woolston's first term, but neither was there any backsliding, and both men kept the physical property in good shape. During Woolston's second term (1917-1947), except for the eight years 1933-1941, the Republicans were in power, but by this time it was clearly recognized that professionals were necessary, and that discontinuity in office was bad. Woolston was able to satisfy which ever party was in power, and it was said that he made nominal money contributions to both, and urged that others on the staff do likewise. He was also willing to agree to the appointment of workers on a political basis. Nothing unethical was involved, and he felt that the welfare of the school needed to be protected.

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As in previous periods the trustees and superintendents (the latter were officially designated as Managing Officers from 1917-

1944, but we shall use the two terms interchangeably, since "superintendent" continued to be used unofficially) had as one of their principal responsibilities the maintenance and improvement of the physical plant. Except in times of economic depression there was no great problem about persuading the General Assembly to appropriate sufficient funds for operation, but occasionally it was slow about providing for new buildings. When Frank Hall assumed charge in 1890, the expenditure for the preceding year's "ordinary expenses"—salaries, food, and supplies—were \$42,062, and for repairs and improvements, \$3,843, for renovation of the chapel, \$4,350, for building a cottage for girls, \$18,000, equipment for piano tuning, \$3,000, and \$1,000 for a covered walk so that girls could exercise outdoors in bad weather. All of the latter items were provided for by special appropriation, and the total annual expenditure was thus \$58,445. Twenty-six years later in 1916, the appropriation, not including any capital expenditures, was \$131,709 and, as with other state institutions, it has continued to rise ever since.

During the depression years of 1893-1897, Governor Altgeld directed Short to reduce expenses, and on January 6, 1894, the governor wrote to the new superintendent,

I am very disappointed in the showing which you made in your report for the last quarter. The per capita cost of running the institution, according to your report, was \$71.69 for that quarter, whereas the cost per capita during the corresponding quarter of the year 1892, under Republican management, was only \$53.73. . . . Instead of an increase in the running expenses I expected to see a considerable amount of a decrease. Kindly examine every part of the machinery connected with running your institution and see if there is not some laxness somewhere and if there is correct it at once. If you have more high priced help than you need, get rid of all that you do not need. . . . If you find that the salaries paid for the more important places are higher than the same grade of men who fill these places outside, have them reduced. There is no reason why the state should pay higher salaries than are paid by private individuals. If you are not already doing so, then I hope that you will make it a rule to buy everything on requisition from responsible houses dealing in the line of goods that are needed, preserving the bids together with a copy of the requisition. You will find that this will aid you greatly. If there is any way in which I can assist you call on me,

Short, who was really very conscientious in the performance of his duties, hastened to explain to the governor why the expenditures had occurred, and the governor replied,

. . . . your explanation seems entirely satisfactory. I have felt all along that you were doing your best to run the institution economically and at the same time bring it onto a high plane, and my letter was written from a desire to assist you, rather than to criticize. Your letter brings out some matters that I did not know of before.

The impact of the first world war was felt at the school. In 1918 Woolston reported that "for the first time in the history of the school a valuable garden had been raised. . . . Many vegetables of all kinds have been produced which will result in the saving of thousands of dollars. The land where these valuable gardens were raised was never used to good advantage prior to this year." The garden was cared for by patients at the State Hospital, and as Woolston said, "It has been a helpful agreeable occupation for them and a great saving for the school." Another economy move during the first world war was the transfer of the dairy herd to the Jacksonville State Hospital, and the latter supplied the school with milk. After this, the land originally purchased for pasture was little used, and it was finally sold in 1962.

Throughout the period 1890-1920, as in earlier times, the physical plant was constantly improved, repaired, renovated, and added to. In 1892 the hospital was moved from the north wing of the main building and placed in an isolated structure north of the girls' cottage which had formerly been used for food storage. In the same year the workshop and dormitory for the shophands was completed and occupied. Because the new girls' cottage was to be heated by steam, the boiler house was enlarged. In 1894 an electrical generator costing \$1,000 was placed in the boiler house. "The plans and specifications for the generator were carefully made by an expert in that method of lighting buildings. . . . The job was thoroughly tested by the most approved scientific methods and was found to be perfect and satisfactory in every particular. It is a very valuable improvement, and adds much to the comfort of all persons who have employment in the Institution."

Also in 1894, a thorough inspection of the plumbing and heating system and the buildings themselves was made, and a renovation followed in 1896. It is impossible for us to detail all the other changes and repairs made during the years 1890-1920, but we can



note the new buildings that were erected. The general tendency was first to build new cottages and to remove all children from dormitories in the main building, and second to place new service buildings toward the rear of the campus. The third effort was to improve fire safety measures.

The principal new buildings were the girls' cottage in 1889, the gymnasium in 1895, and a boys' cottage in about 1900. An isolation ward was built onto the hospital at the same time. Sidewalks, an entrance drive, and landscaping were added from time to time. At the rear (to the north), were auxiliary buildings—carriage house, stable, laundry, dairy barn, woodshed, and carpenter and paint shop. Some were of wood, but most were permanent brick structures. Pictures of the period show comfortable brick buildings typically nineteenth century institutional in design. The girls' cottage was like an elegant private residence, and the main building was stately and imposing in its large size and many windows, but the boys' cottage, the hospital, and the workshop were more utilitarian in their unornamented red brick. The gymnasium, with its look of a medieval castle, attracted special attention. The whole campus, from its brick lamp standards at the entrance to the semi-circular drive in front of the main building, to the cow barns and stables alongside the Wabash Railroad, was a pleasant grass-covered expanse, dotted with flowers and plants grown in the small hothouse behind the hospital, and shaded by tall elm trees. Essentially the grounds retained this same appearance down to the 1960's when the process of replacing the old structures with ones more suitable for the educational needs of blind children in the second century of the school was begun.

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In the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth there were between 190 and 230 pupils in the school. All but seventy-five of them lived in the main building occupying dormitories of twenty or thirty beds. The boys and girls who lived in the two cottages had a more private life, with only two or three to a bedroom. The dining hall where all the children, the staff, and the men in the workshop had their meals was in the basement of the main building, but later was moved to the first floor. Pupils sat at tables of six or eight, with teachers and supervisors to watch and help them. The maids who served the food also assisted the younger children. As the dinner bell sounded, the children lined up at the door under the eyes of the teachers and other attendants, and marched into the dining room. At the tap of a bell, they stood



silently while grace was said. (The "grace bell" is now in the Historical Room.)

Food was plentiful and generally well-cooked and palatable. The lists of expenditures in the annual reports of the superintendents indicate that beef, pork, and fowl were served regularly, and potatoes were always on the menu, but there were other vegetables such as beans, peas, and turnips, some of them canned out of the school garden. Fruits were also preserved and some were made into marmalades and jellies. The school had its own bakeshop, and butter and milk were provided by the Holstein dairy herd. Since the teachers and sometimes the superintendents ate in the same dining room, the diet was probably not as monotonous and bland as that in most of the state institutions.

Superintendents and their staffs recognized that the school stood *in loco parentis*, and all the needs of the pupils were provided for. Parents supplied the clothing for their children, but cottage parents and teachers often made emergency purchases, and for those pupils who were wards of the courts in their home counties, clothing was provided by the school and the county treasurers made reimbursement.

By the standards of the 1970's, the recreational opportunities of the pupils were very limited, but in nineteenth century terms, the best provisions possible were made so that the students did lead a very busy life. The school day was long, and with music practice, workshop attendance, and gymnasium activities, there was little time left over for free play. The most difficult time for both pupils and supervisors was Saturday and Sunday, when, except for Sunday school and church attendance, there was little organized activity. Boys, especially, found ways to occupy their time, but not always constructively. At the north of the campus, along the railroad, were ponds or sloughs of water, and older alumni tell of clandestine skinny-dipping in these pools. The railroad tracks and the freight cars standing on the sidings to the east were frequented by the boys in the free time after supper in the evening. There was just enough danger and excitement in climbing to the top of a boxcar and walking from one end to another to attract the more venturesome young men. Fortunately no serious accident occurred, but one story points to the possibility of disaster, and at the same time illustrates the ingenuity of boys in covering up their escapades. One evening a boy missed his footing while climbing down the ladder on a boxcar, fell, and broke his ankle. His companions carried him up the stairs to his dormitory in the main building, and got him into his night dress. Then they carried him down to the first floor again, put

him at the foot of the stairs, and called the night boys' supervisor, and told him that the boy had broken his ankle by falling down stairs! The lad was taken to the school hospital and the doctor was called. Because of their cover-up, the pupils were free to continue to frequent the railroad, although, for a while, they were more careful.

Rainy weekends must have been trials for house mothers and supervisors, although indoor games such as checkers, chess, and so on were provided. (In the Historical Room is a set of cards in Boston line with which to play "Authors.") Teachers and house mothers also held reading sessions. In inclement weather boys worked out in the gym, and the girls were provided with a covered cement walk on which they could skate and play games.

As they always had, pupils did much walking around the town, and enjoyed picnics in the countryside. Older boys frequently made such excursions without adult supervision, partially sighted young men usually acting as guides. For trips by such groups as the drill team or musical organizations, the school possessed a large wagon with seats that was called a "band wagon." Whether they hiked or rode in the wagon, such excursions were welcome relief from school routine. The problem of providing suitable recreation was recognized, and, as Superintendent Freeman said, "Special efforts were made to make the life of the pupils as cheerful as possible. As a source of instruction and inspiration as well as a pastime to others, it is our custom to hold literary, musical and other entertainments at different periods of the year—Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays, Easter, the annual May Concert, [and] the annual gymnasium exhibition. . . ."

As we have noted, there was varied entertainment and instruction at assemblies. All of these programs, in 1970, are still carried on.

Partly because there was no fully planned participatory recreation, partly because of their handicaps, and partly because of emotional or mental difficulties, there were frequent discipline problems, just as were always to be found in schools for the blind. Frank Hall, a kindly man who possessed a well-developed sense of humor, and who was at the same time calm and deliberate in action, inspired the staff to develop the same qualities. Here is an example of his treatment of a difficult problem: "Your letter received, inclosed herewith is a letter from your sister. It is so difficult for us to talk with her that we do not know exactly what she wants to do or what is best for her. If she can be contented to remain with us, I think we shall learn to communicate with her after a little time."

In the early weeks of any school year, there were frequent cases of homesickness. Almost every alumnus of the school, especially those who lost their sight at the age of ten or twelve, recalls the black days when they had to leave their families and friends to enter on a new and unknown life. Already emotionally upset because of their sudden blindness, they found the residential school life almost more than they could take. All superintendents and teachers had to deal with such cases. Here was the way Frank Hall handled one:

Yours of September 25 enclosing one to Arnold received. I will do all that you suggest and will write to you promptly if Arnold's health does not remain good. He is quite changed this morning—the effect of your letter to him. He came to me this time to help him plan his work, and not to let him go home. I think he will make a great effort to brace up. He is doing well in all that he undertakes, though he is inclined to put in too many hours a day in work. I will certainly endeavor to put myself in your place as much as possible, and advise, encourage and direct Arnold to what is seemingly best for him. I only wish we could do more for the comfort and well-being of those who are deprived of their sight.

There were always instances when pupils teased or mistreated those younger and weaker than themselves. For example, Willie Reige complained to his father that he did not like the school and wanted to come home. Hall investigated and found that the real cause was something else. He wrote to Mr. Reige,

I have had a talk with Willie. He admits that he misrepresented his work and condition in the letter he wrote to you. I think the cause of this effort to convince you that he ought to go home grew out of the fact that some of his mates have been unjustly and improperly annoying him. This we will endeavor to prevent in the future, although I suppose there will always be some quarrels on our playgrounds.

Sometimes, in spite of all that could be done, the conduct of some pupils was such that they had to be sent home. This was done with reluctance, however, and on one occasion Hall wrote,

At first we thought it best to say that we could not receive him; but, on showing your letter to officers who were here when he was here before, we are led to feel that it will be the proper thing to

do to allow him to come back, but please say to him that he comes on trial, and that, if we discover that he has a bad influence over other pupils, we shall send him away without notice.

The daily care of the boys in the school was in the hands of supervisors who were also watchmen and security officers. For Major McDougall who was at the school in the 1890's, Hall outlined the duty of the day supervisor, who was on call from 6:30 in the morning until 6:30 in the evening. He was to,

Read to shopmen Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday evenings. Conduct outdoor drill for boys every day except Sunday 4 to 4:30, and outdoor drill for girls every day from 4:30 to 5. Company drill at 5 to 5:30.

1. Have general supervision of the boys and men, and of the girls so far as the halls and practice rooms of the main building were concerned.
2. Visit every practice room in the basement and on the first and second floor of the main building every half hour except during meal time and drill time.
3. Give all signals while on duty.
4. Have general charge of dining room while pupils were eating.
5. Assign time and place for larger boys to bathe and see that this duty is regularly performed.
6. See that the clothing of the larger boys and men is in good condition and that they keep themselves neat and tidy.
7. Make all needful requisitions for clothing for boys and men and pass the same to the superintendent's office.
8. Keep account of tardiness and absence of boys and men at meal time, at chapel, and of both boys and girls in the practice rooms of the main building.
9. Excuse boys and men when necessary from any or all school and shop duties and notify teachers whenever any of their pupils have been excused from recitations.
10. Give permission for boys and men to absent themselves from the institution grounds whenever this seems to be in no way objectionable, and to keep a record of the same.
11. Read letters to boys and men.

When Major McDougall went off duty at 6:30, the night supervisor, U. S. Bailey, took over. In addition to his duty to patrol the buildings every hour, he was to "meet the little boys in their sitting room at 8:00 and see that they go quietly to their dormitory, im-



mediately undress and retire at 9:00 and are quiet. Observe the dormitories over the chapel very closely until all seem to be asleep." At 6:00 in the morning he was to see that "all the boys are awake . . . and that the pupils, especially those that sleep over the chapel come down the stairs quietly."

In addition to the supervisor, the younger boys were also under the care of a matron. For many years this was Miss Katherine Halpin. Hall said that she "has been both mother and nurse, comforting them in their sorrows and caring for them in sickness. Many have been her disagreeable duties uncomplainingly performed. Great has been her reward expressed in terms of loving appreciation by the children to whom she has so faithfully devoted herself, as by the parents and friends of these almost without exception." There were also matrons in charge of the girls. As separate cottages were built (girls' in 1889 and boys' in 1900), they were put in charge of cottage supervisors, a term that was sometimes used as late as 1940, although the title cottage parents was coming into use.

The general oversight of the maids and kitchen and dining room help was exercised by the matron, who, until 1907, was also the wife of the superintendent. Hall described the duties of his wife:

She has taken the entire charge of from thirty to thirty-three female employees, apportioning their work, and discharging when necessary. . . . During the summer vacations she has taken charge of the painters, masons, carpenters who were employed to make the necessary changes and repairs. She has purchased a large part of the furniture and dry goods required for use in the institution, and her judgment has been regarded as final in the matter of selecting clothing for about one-half of our pupils who have been clothed at the expense of the several counties from whence they came.



In earlier chapters we have noted some of the problems of admitting persons to the institution. Not only did the superintendents have to deal with adults who needed asylum, but also with children who were "backward" or "feeble-minded." Today we use the terms "mentally retarded" or "mentally handicapped." Hall and later superintendents required a statement from a doctor or other competent persons, or they made personal visits to the home to determine if the child was educable. Hall stated the matter thus,

This, as you probably know is an educational institution.

Ordinarily we would not be expected to receive feeble-minded children, yet we have sometimes done so, and in some cases have been gratified to find that the mental condition and power could be greatly improved. Indeed we have had cases where the feeble-mindedness seemed to us to be caused by a lack of instruction and exercise of the mental faculties. I would not be willing to receive the boy to whom you refer without knowing more of his condition. I shall be in Chicago this week . . . I will find time to visit you and the boy.

For the reasons that Hall gave, he hesitated to reject any child, but occasionally he had to do so. And, in his day, there was no other state agency to care for the non-educable blind. The state did have an institution at Lincoln but at that time and for many years thereafter there was no provision for teaching blind children. It was not until the 1920's that psychological and mental testing of applicants began, and until that time the admission of pupils was on the basis of trial and error. The Illinois school was not alone in having to meet the problem of the feeble-minded or backward child, because the matter was frequently discussed at the meetings of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind. In 1910 it was pointed out that the special problems of educating the backward child had first begun in Germany in 1889. Progressive schools there and in the United States had segregated these children into separate classes, and this was recommended for the schools for the blind. The solution adopted at the Illinois school was to give such children as much individual attention as possible, and by the 1920's and 1930's special classes were provided for "slow learners" and the mentally handicapped.

A second major problem of classification for admission and placement was the degree of blindness that was necessary. Until 1890 admission was on certification from a competent ophthalmologist or oculist that a child did not have sufficient sight to be educated in the public schools. This proved to be quite unsatisfactory, and Superintendent Hall employed Dr. Arthur E. Prince, who now had a clinic in Springfield, to examine each child, and determine which would benefit by treatment, with the idea that such, if so benefited, could return to the public schools. Dr. Prince also determined the degree of sight and the cause of the loss of vision. His examination showed that of two hundred and seven pupils, seventy-three could not see any light, and eighty had "mere perception of light." Twenty-nine could count fingers at a distance of one to twenty feet, and twenty-five had  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of vision. In his report Dr. Prince

did not really do what was expected of him, but gave his main attention to the causes of blindness. Of the 185 pupils in which the cause could be established, the following distribution was determined:

Ophthalmia Neonatorum .....	24%
" Purulent .....	20.7%
" Trachomatous .....	18.5%
Congenital .....	16.6%
Traumatism .....	9.7%

The purpose of Dr. Prince's report appears to have been mainly educational. He pointed out that 62.9 percent of the blindness could have been prevented. *Ophthalmia neonatorum* (popularly called "baby sore eyes") which was caused by gonorrheal infection of the birth canal of the mother, could be cured by the application to the baby's eyes of an antiseptic, particularly silver nitrate, immediately after birth. *Ophthalmia purulent*, an infection appearing later in childhood, was caused by contamination from infectious disease, particularly measles. It could be cured by better sanitary measures in school and home. The third major cause, *Ophthalmia trachomatous* ("granulated lids") could also be prevented by better sanitary measures.

In 1893 Dr. Albyn L. Adams was appointed as oculist on an annual retaining basis. Dr. Adams was born in Canada in 1865, but was educated in the United States. His medical training was in Chicago at the Bennett Medical College and in New York at the Physicians and Surgeons College. In 1889 he came to Jacksonville as a specialist in the diseases of the eye, ear, nose, and throat, working at first with Dr. Prince. For fifty-seven years he served at the Illinois School for the Blind until his death in 1949. In the last years he was aided by Dr. Alfred G. Schultz, who succeeded him and was still serving the school in 1970. Dr. Adams made notable contributions to the school and to his profession through his collection of statistics, his interest in the prevention of blindness, and his work in the pioneer sight saving program at the school, a matter that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Dr. Adams made an annual examination of the students followed up by weekly visits to treat or operate upon "those who sought relief from pain, and to save what little valuable vision remained to others." In one year (1900), Dr. Adams performed forty operations, among them fourteen for removal of eyeballs, eight to correct deformed eyelids, twelve for correction of defects in the iris of the



eye, and others not specified. He said "that the results were quite satisfactory, as the amount of vision was materially increased in the majority." Other persons were given medication, and, where possible, spectacles were fitted. Some children, after operations and/or refractions had their vision so improved that they were returned to the public schools.

Dr. Adams recorded in detail the causes of blindness and the degree of sight possessed by each pupil. As he said, "the record conformed to that usually adopted in securing these statistics, and our record can be compared with that of other institutions." Dr. Adams put his findings in a large ledger which is now in the Historical Room of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School.

The principal cause of blindness among the pupils, as determined by Dr. Adams, was the same as that in other schools—*Ophthalmia neonatorum*. Illinois did have a law requiring that silver nitrate be placed in the eyes of all new-born infants to prevent the disease from developing, but it was not well enforced. The movement to strengthen this law, and those in other states, was given a strong boost when, about 1905, the Russell Sage Foundation gave financial support to found state Societies for the Prevention of Blindness. The incidence of *Ophthalmia neonatorum* was slowly reduced, although at the Illinois school it remained at around 25 percent until the 1920's; today it has practically been eliminated.

The problem of the child with "useful vision" was of special interest to Dr. Adams. He was not willing to refuse summarily admission to children who could read ordinary print, although with difficulty, but at the same time could get about readily. He often found that the diseased condition of the eyes required that children not use their eyes. Other children had light perception sufficient for seeing large objects, but not enough to read even large print. Under these conditions, Dr. Adams set up as a criterion for admission that it should not rest "entirely on the amount of vision but rather on the final outcome of the case. If the probabilities are that vision will be lost in a short time, the vision during that time can be used to immense advantage in getting adjusted to the new system." Dr. Adams' decisions were accepted by Hall and later superintendents, and thus children were admitted or rejected on the basis of what was best for the individual. Through Dr. Adams' interest, a "conservation of vision" class was organized in 1921, the second to be established in any residential school. The first was at Perkins Institution in 1913, and the subject was discussed at the meeting of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind in 1915, but it was stated then that such classes were better placed in the public



schools. After a brief experiment, however, the class at the Illinois school was dropped, and was not revived until the 1930's when sight saving classes were instituted.

The matter of admissions was greatly improved by the passage of a law declaring it to be the duty of parents or guardian to send blind children to school, either private, local public, or Illinois School for the Blind. After the passage of this law Superintendent Woolston advised the legislature that it was necessary that a social worker be available to locate, and then visit in the homes of blind children to help prepare admission papers for the child. These included the report of an oculist on the condition of the eyes which was sent to Dr. Adams. He was thus able to have more information about the child when he made his own examination in Jacksonville. As we shall see, later the social workers also aided graduates of the school to find jobs. The first two social workers were appointed in 1920.

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Information for the public about the education of the blind and the facilities of the school continued to be supplied, in part, by sending out pupils to give concerts and demonstrate reading and writing braille, the use of maps with raised symbols, and so on, a practice that was still followed as late as the 1960's.

Two unusual opportunities to inform the public occurred at the World Fairs of 1893 at Chicago, and 1904 at St. Louis. The Columbian Exposition at Chicago not only had extensive exhibits of arts, crafts, and manufacturing, but there were great congresses on education and other fields of endeavor. Frank Hall was appointed to head a committee to plan both for the congress on the conditions of the blind throughout the world, and for a great combined exhibit of the work of the schools for the blind in the United States and abroad. Hall devoted much time to meeting and corresponding with the superintendents and the officials of the fair. The Congress of Educators of the Blind was successfully organized and well attended. The keynote speaker was the Reverend William H. Milburn, a Jacksonville man, who, we remember, had interested himself in the founding of the school, but had played no part since. He had become well-known as a lecturer and writer and as the chaplain of the United States House of Representatives. Hall, as the chairman of the organizing committee, spoke briefly on the subject of the education of the blind, expressing much the same ideas that we have already examined. On the second day of the Congress, Superintendent Short gave the invocation, and Professor Wallace P. Day spoke on "Music in the Schools of the Blind."

Hall and his committee were not successful in getting the nation's schools to cooperate in a general exhibit area. Most preferred to place them in special state buildings. The Illinois school had its principal exhibit in the Illinois Building. Hall was allowed \$6,000 to provide a suitable display, and he chose to have pupils, working in shifts, to demonstrate how the typewriter, the braille writer, and the stereotypemaker operated, and how printing was done. Pupils also used braille and New York point slates, "thus bringing the old and the new into striking contrast." Broom making, swing hammock netting and other handicrafts were also displayed, and the products sold to the visitors. At intervals musical performances were given. Included in the display were a number of enlarged photographs showing the buildings and equipment, pupils engaged in military drill, and other activities. Another World's Fair project was the printing of a pamphlet history of the school, most probably written by Hall. In speaking of Hall's work for the Fair, the committee in charge of the Illinois exhibits paid tribute to Hall's "consummate ability and fidelity for organizing and superintending the exhibit, and especially to the equanimity and good humor shown by him under his retirement from the position of superintendent, which in no wise dampened or diminished his energy in making the exhibit a grand success." A gold medal awarded by the fair management is now in the Historical Room of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School.

At the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904, a single "active" exhibit was provided. In June a class of boys showed the work done in the sloyd room, and a class of girls demonstrated sewing, raffia work, and other skills. In late August and early September other classes illustrated the literary and musical accomplishments. Arthur Jewell, the head of the printing shop, was present to explain and operate the stereotyper. For Helen Keller Day on October 18, Emma Kubicek and her teacher Mrs. Jordan, were present, and stayed for several days. There was also an extensive showing of handicraft objects, and a photograph display.

Freeman said, "Doubtless much good was accomplished by the exhibit. . . . Some visitors from Illinois heard at the Fair for the first time of the existence and location of our school. The blind as a class were benefited by a more just and accurate public sentiment." The school received a certificate of a grand prize and a gold medal. The twenty-five or thirty young people who spent time at the St. Louis fair were greatly stimulated by the experience. Frauncie Moon, a twelve-year-old girl who later became the librarian of the school, and served for many years, wrote to her father,

Dear Papa, I will now go on with my visits. Thursday afternoon we visited the temple of music. Friday we did not go out because it rained all day. O yes, Thursday night we took a visit on the Pike and saw an elephant. Then we went through an imitation of a street in Cairo. Next we went through mysterious Asia.

After spending some time at the American Indian encampment, she wrote,

They let us feel their babies, their pottery ware, their slippers, clothing, wigwams, everything else imaginable.

The children also visited the Indian school exhibit, and went through the industrial and transportation buildings, a glass factory, and a mining exhibit. The children were housed near the camp of cadets from West Point, and were awakened each day by the bugle. Frauncie told her father,

Friday when it rained so hard and the water was rushing by the cadets sat at the doors of their tents and yelled, 'This way for the Galveston flood.' . . . We have lots of fun with them. I will have lots to tell you about the soldiers and Indians when I get home. . . . You ought to hear the funny questions the people ask us about our work. I am making a pillow case at the present time. I have lots of fun talking to the deaf and dumb girls [who had an exhibit nearby]. I learned their alphabet from one of the girls, so I talk to them.

- - -

A feature of commencement time at the Illinois School for the Blind after 1887 was the biennial meeting of the Alumni Association. This organization was formed on May 31, 1887, by H. I. Carpenter, class of 1883. Regular meetings were held in 1889 and 1891, but the 1893 meeting was postponed until 1894, because of the World's Fair, and the Association has met in even-numbered years ever since.

There are no reports of the meetings until 1898. Since then the minutes and treasurer's reports have been carefully kept, and are now in the Alumni Files in the Historical Room. The early meetings were largely devoted to enjoying fellowship, reminiscing about school days, and attending a concert at which members performed. From the beginning, membership included only graduates of the high school. There was an especially close feeling among these



people because many of them had been in attendance at the school from early childhood, and they had been very closely associated for as many as fourteen years. Thus the school loomed large in their memories because it was their home during their formative years, and what they learned there, both intellectually and socially, affected their lives ever after. The Alumni Association, as we shall see, was also concerned with school affairs, and sometimes its actions and influence was felt in programs carried out by the institution. The Association was also interested in the welfare of all the blind persons in Illinois, and it threw its weight back of legislation to improve their condition.

Among the matters to which the Alumni Association addressed itself was that of securing college scholarships for the blind. Some workers with the blind advocated an institution similar to Gallaudet College for the Deaf, but the movement made little headway, because the blind, with the use of the braille writer, the typewriter, and the employment of readers, could successfully attend any college. Therefore, the alumni as early as 1898, advocated that the state supply scholarships to those who went to college. In a few years Illinois did adopt such a policy, and it will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Alumni Association was also interested in furthering the employment of the blind. In 1912 it adopted a resolution calling on the heads of each department of the state government having to do with the care and education of the blind to employ blind persons wherever possible. At the same session a committee was appointed to be an agency to secure employment for blind persons, particularly the graduates of the school. Nothing came of this first attempt, and the matter was taken up again in 1914, when an employment bureau of three persons was created. The members were Ethel Kimball, Frederick G. Meyers, and Louis W. Rodenberg, all teachers at the school for the blind. But because of the press of other responsibilities, the committee made but slight progress toward actually getting work for people. The employment bureau members, however, did give advice to individuals about employment problems, and in a few cases, prospective employers were contacted. Eventually the school for the blind took more responsibility for getting graduates placed, and finally the state itself provided vocational service.

Another long continued activity of the alumni was the establishment of a trust fund "to aid needy blind persons of the state in the furtherance of their education or to assist them in business." The fund started in a small way in 1912 with out-of-pocket donations made at the meetings. Later it received larger gifts from many sources.



Thus, in the period 1890-1920, a firm foundation was laid for the many activities of the Alumni Association that have taken place in recent years. In 1920 the secretary reported that ninety-two out of 239 living graduates since 1878 (the first year a class was graduated) were present. The alumni were always guests of the school. The superintendents welcomed them cordially, and the association always thanked the school for the hospitality.

- - -

An important enterprise associated with the Illinois School for the Blind was the printing shop that Frank Hall established in order to supply reading material and music in quantities so that each pupil would have his own individual copy. Among the first products of the shop were scripture readings and other things printed on Saturdays for the use of the Sunday School held on each Sunday afternoon. They were printed in American braille as were the music and exercises for the classrooms. Very rapidly, as Hall's work in printing with the use of the stereotyper became known (he distributed samples of the work to many friends and leaders in other schools), orders were received for braille music. As Short said, "This work promises to be a source of considerable revenue to the Institution, besides providing for our own teachers and pupils." In 1896 a catalog of music available for distribution listed 316 pieces which were sold for two cents a page.

In 1898 this list had grown to 670. Because the stereotypes were made on thin sheets of metal, usually brass or zinc, it was easy to store many plates, and have them accessible for use when orders came in. No very large stock of printed music needed be kept on hand. Also, by 1898, several books were printed by dividing them into sections twenty-four to forty pages so that they could be conveniently used by the readers. Each pupil was given one of these booklets at graduation. Soon there were two stereotypers in use in the printing shop, and Hall reported that in a fireproof safe there were 6,000 plates of music and 5,000 of literary matter, and that the legislature had made a special appropriation of \$500 a year for the support of the shop.

The printer in charge of the shop was Arthur Jewell, who, as a pupil had assisted Hall in setting up the shop. He was also a competent pianist and had as a reader Miss Anne Wakely Jackson who read from music in ink print, and Jewell transcribed it into braille directly on the stereo plate.

The printing of textbooks continued to expand. By 1904 seventy publications had been sent to schools in thirty states. Among the

books were the *Werner Arithmetic Series*, edited by Hall; a United States geography; and readers for literature classes, including selections from such authors as Dickens, Lamb, Browning, Burns, Tennyson, and Shakespeare.

The fireproof vault began to fill up with embossed plates, and many schools purchased the music and literature printed from them. It was an important supplement to the materials supplied by the American Printing House, especially because the publications of the latter in braille were few. Even when, by action of the superintendents of the schools for the blind, half of the output was in braille (the other half was in New York point), there was still a shortage because the appropriations of Congress were comparatively small. For example, the Illinois School for the Blind received only \$486 for book purchases as late as 1910. Consequently the local press supplied an important addition. Other schools were in the same position, and they therefore made purchases from the Illinois school press. At the same time the volume of requests was not so large that it could not be handled, because the Missouri school, the Perkins Institution, and others purchased their own stereotypers and established their own printing shops. (The Howe Press at Perkins was already in existence.) Nevertheless, the Illinois shop continued to be the largest supplier of brailled music. In 1912-1914, 70,000 pages of music and 7,000 pages of literature were shipped, and the return was over \$1,000; in addition the school itself was supplied with materials valued at \$500.

Arthur Jewell died in 1912. He was succeeded by Louis W. Rodenberg, born in 1891, who entered the school at the age of nine when his sight was destroyed in an accident. Young Rodenberg was a serious student who sought to be at the top of his class. He played the piano and the violincello well, and became very knowledgeable about musicology and theory. He was also very adept with his hands, turning out beautiful articles in the sloyd shop. He graduated from the high school in 1911, and returned for two years of postgraduate work in music and Latin. It was during his last term that Superintendent Woolston tapped him to head the printing shop. As his biographer and long-time associate, Miss Miriam Russel, said, "Young Rodenberg did not shirk the heavy and unexpected responsibility suddenly thrust upon his shoulders, but fortified by his natural mechanical ability, he worked steadily and soon proved that Mr. Woolston's choice of him as Supervisor of the Print Shop was fortunate and timely."

Rodenberg became an expert on braille printing, and its use as a means of communication for the blind, working especially for na-

tional and international standardization. As a result of his investigation he prepared a new system of arrangement of braille music scores in a form similar to that used by sighted persons. He called it "Bar over Bar." After experimentation at the Illinois school, as well as at other places, he wrote and published *A Key to Braille Music Notation* in 1915.

Rodenberg, tall and straight of carriage, and able to move about freely, continued to read and write, and broadly educated himself, even going deeply into such special subjects as medicine and architecture. He traveled widely and wrote articles and poems. We shall follow his career in later chapters, as he gained national and international fame as a braille expert.

To

DEAR SIR: By a recent Act of the General Assembly of this State, provision has been made for the establishment of an Institution for the education of the Blind, to be located at this place.

The Board of Trustees having been duly organized, have bestowed their first attention upon the arrangements which should be adopted for opening the school at the earliest period. To this end, they have engaged the services of Mr. SAMUEL BACON as Principal of the Institution, under whose direction the School will be opened on the first Monday of April next, in a commodious building which will be used for the purpose until the proper edifice is completed. Mr. BACON has heretofore been employed in the Ohio Institution, and more recently in a school for the Blind which was supported during the last year by the citizens of Jacksonville, and is known to us to be qualified for the place to which we have appointed him in the new Institution.

The Trustees adopt this method of making known throughout the State, the organization of the School, and the time when the first term will commence. The education being gratuitous, it is hoped that the friends of the Blind in Illinois, will be induced to bring the objects of this communication to their especial notice. The Trustees will be ready from this time to receive applications for admission, and hope to be able to receive all of those over the age of ten years, who may present themselves at the opening of the School.

The pupils will be instructed in all the branches of a good English Education and in Music. In due time, arrangements will be made for imparting to them instruction in Classical Literature, and in such arts and trades as they may be likely to pursue with advantage.

The scholars shall be well provided with good boarding, lodging, fuel, lights, &c., at the expense of the Institution, and be under the constant care of the Principal, and of a judicious Matron to whom the management of the household will be entrusted. The friends of pupils will only be required to supply them with proper clothing, and to be at the expense of their traveling to and from the institution.

Those to whom this circular may be addressed, will confer a favor by making its contents extensively known in their respective vicinities, and are also earnestly requested at their earliest convenience to communicate to the Board of Trustees, the names and residence of the Blind in their respective counties, together with their ages, causes of blindness, capacity for instruction, and any other information which may be useful.

Hoping that you will cordially co-operate with the Trustees, whose services in this behalf are rendered without any other reward than the satisfaction of serving the cause of humanity.

We are respectfully,

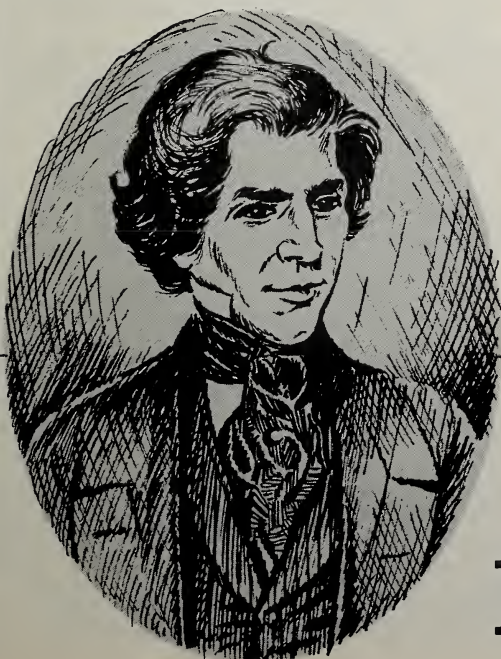
Your obedient servants,

SAM'L D. LOCKWOOD,  
JAMES DUNLAP,  
W. W. HAPPY,  
D. ROCKWELL,  
SAMUEL HUNT, } Trustees.

The first document  
establishing an  
"Institution for the  
Education of the Blind,"  
1849.

Samuel Bacon, the founder and  
first superintendent of the Illinois  
Braille and Sight Saving School,  
1848-1850.

1849-1890

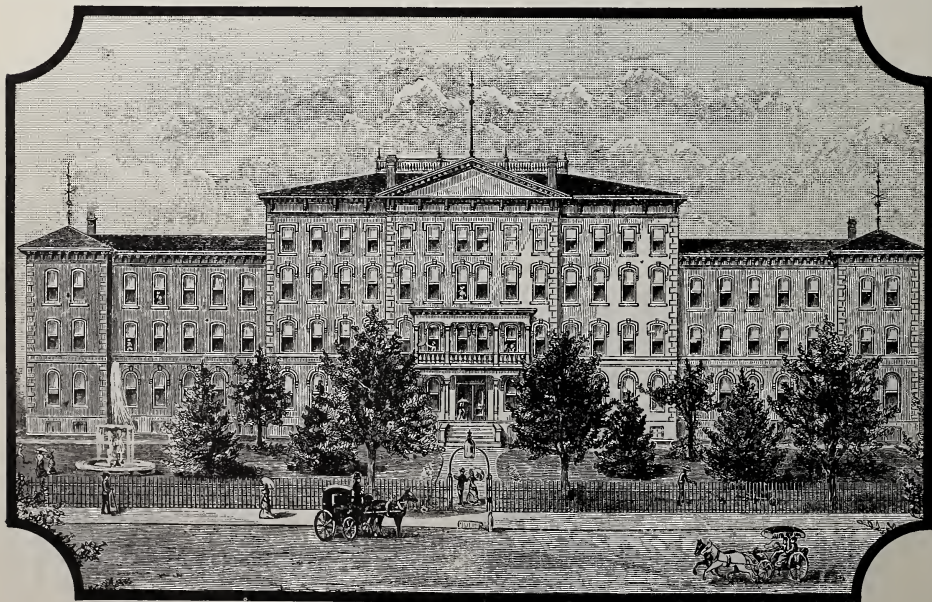






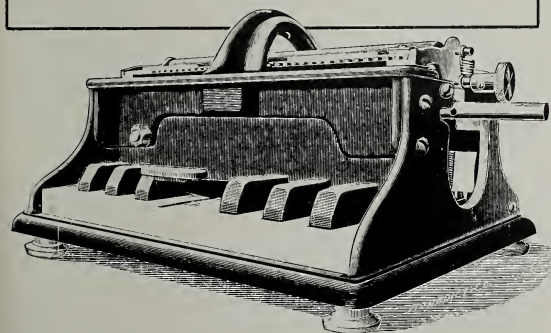
The first building on the East State Street campus, occupied in 1854. It was destroyed by fire in 1869.

The west wing (at left) was erected to replace the original building. The center wing was occupied in 1874, and the east wing in 1882.

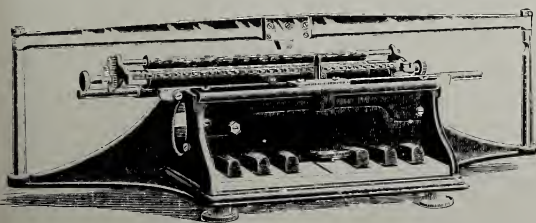


# 1890 1900

Frank H. Hall,  
superintendent,  
1890-1893, 1897-1902.

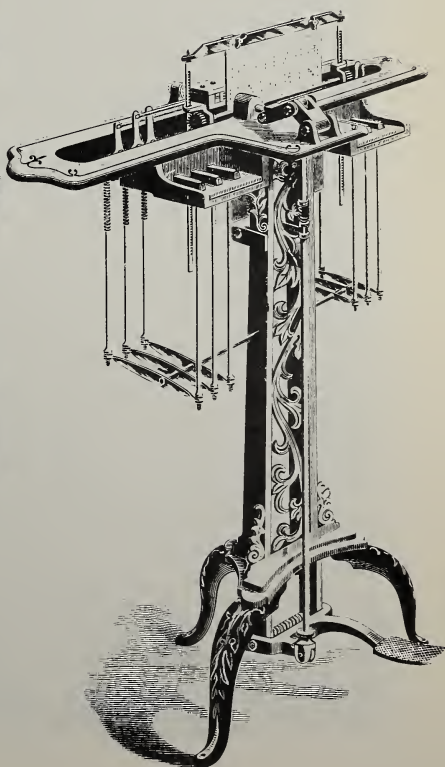


The first Hall Braille Writer (1892).

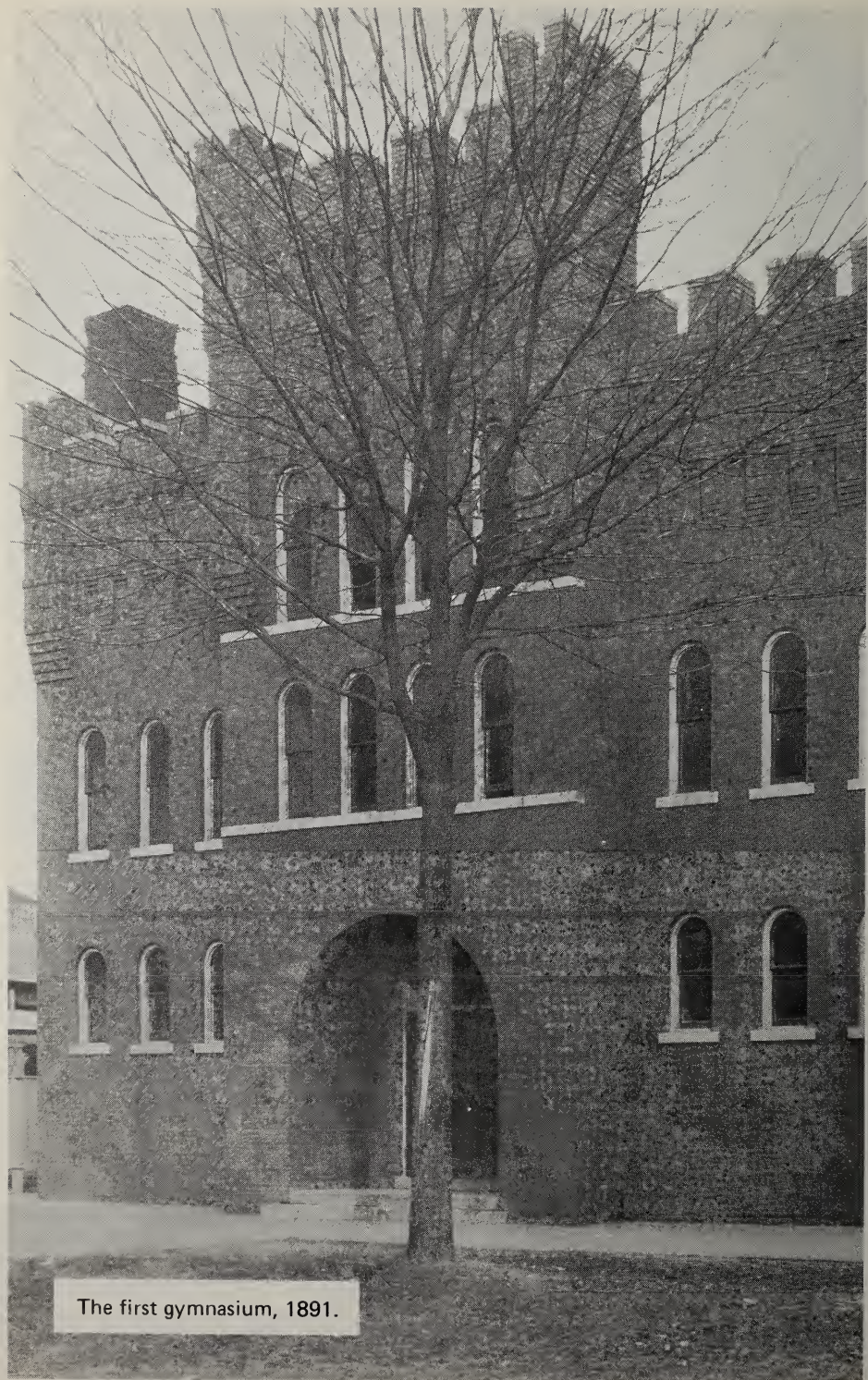


The first Hall Stereotype Machine (1893).

The second version of the Hall Stereotype Machine (1893), using foot pedal.







The first gymnasium, 1891.





The student body in the chapel, 1904.

The printing shop in 1904. Miss Anne Wakeley Jackson dictating music to Arthur Jewell, printer from 1893-1912. He is using the third model of the stereotype maker, now in the historical room at the school.



1900  
1920





Emma Kubicek, the first deaf-blind child taught at the school, in 1902.  
Mrs. Helen Jordan is the teacher.





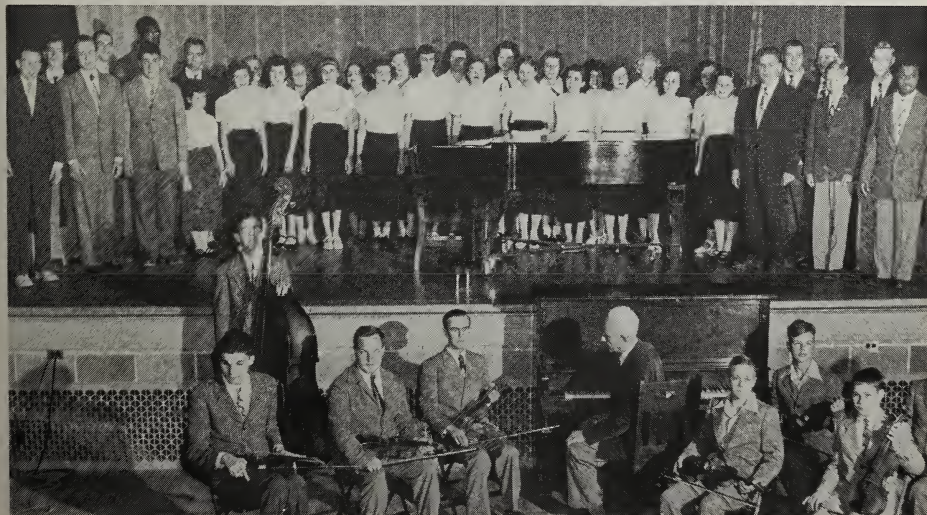
The main building in 1929. No further outside changes were made.  
The structure was razed in 1971.



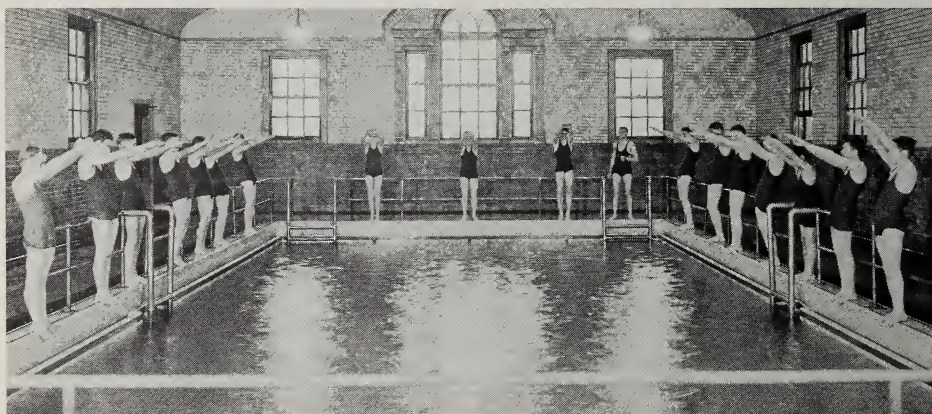
**1920  
1950**

The circulating library was  
in use until 1964, but has  
since been removed.

Music organization, 1950. Frank G. Meyers at the piano.







Geography class, 1950.  
Miss Helen Sweeney,  
teacher.

The first swimming class,  
1929.

Presentation of 1943 Migel  
Medal by Helen Keller to  
Louis W. Rodenberg for  
outstanding service in  
work for the blind, in the  
"Helen Keller Room" of  
the American Foundation  
for the Blind, New York,  
June 15, 1943.





Girls dormitory built in 1889, removed in 1963.

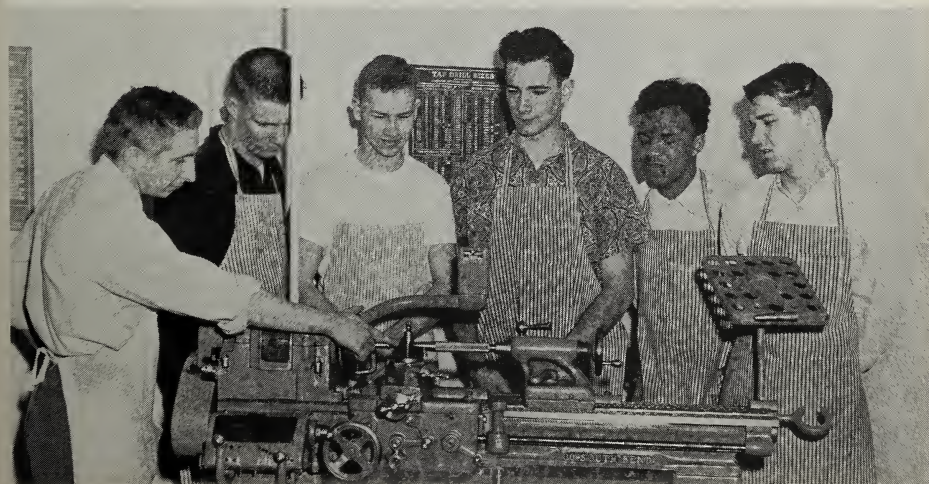


Administration and high school classroom building, 1971.

# 1950-PRESENT



Machine shop, 1955-1956. (left) Roger Anderson, teacher







Cooking class, 1955-1956, Mrs. Ella Bruce, teacher.



Wrestling squad,  
1955-1956. Leo J.  
Flood, superintendent  
(right), Jack Hartong,  
assistant superintendent  
(left), Seymour  
Haliczer, coach (left of  
Mr. Flood).

Mrs. Richard B. Ogilvie,  
wife of the Governor,  
honoring Senator Lowell B.  
Mason (right) for his  
major contributions to  
the music department.  
Jack Hartong (center)  
served as teacher and  
principal, 1943-1956,  
and after a term with  
the State Office, returned  
as superintendent in 1964.



## Chapter Six

# Educational Advance, 1920-1947

During the period which closed in 1920, there were six superintendents, but for the next twenty-seven years there was but Robert W. Woolston. As we have noted he was appointed in 1911 and served briefly until 1914, when he was replaced by Harry C. Montgomery. Woolston returned in 1917 and was in charge until his death in 1947.

Robert W. Woolston was born in Onawa, Iowa, October 28, 1874, graduated from Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, in 1903, and came to the Illinois school in the same year as a supervisor of boys. At various times he took courses at the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and the University of Iowa. In 1911 he married Lucia Orr of Jacksonville, who had been a teacher of younger boys for seven years.

There was little change in the school under the succession of superintendents, but each did maintain the standard set by his predecessor. Even Woolston, in his first term of three years made little impact, and when he came back in 1917 he found it necessary to mark time because of the first world war. With the return of stability, however, he seized leadership and a number of important changes took place in the remaining twenty-seven years of his administration. It was a period that embraced the prosperous twenties, the depression thirties, and the second world war; altogether they brought great social change to the United States. Education for all children was pretty well attained, and especially there was increasing concern that the mentally, emotionally, and physically handicapped, as well as those who were normal, be taken care of. The blind were of course included among these handicapped children. It was also a period in which more and more young people were graduated from high school, and increasing numbers of students, including the blind, went on to college.

The program of education at the Illinois School for the Blind was strongly affected by these trends. While the traditional division into kindergarten, primary, elementary, and high school remained the same, the content of the curriculum and the methods of instruction experienced gradual but significant change. The often expressed aim that the education of the blind should prepare them to be self-supporting and to enjoy a respected and responsible place in society was reaffirmed by Woolston. Never one to speculate or spin theories, he was pragmatic in his approach to the education of the blind, and



supported such advances as standardized braille, courses in handicrafts and skills that might open up vocational opportunities to students, and financial aid for students to go on to college. He also believed that a good grounding in academic subjects was necessary for success in life, and he insisted that this take precedence over other aspects of school life. He felt that success for blind people depended to a great extent on the social adjustments they made when they went out in the world, and so he supported a broad program of social activities for the pupils. We do not find Mr. Woolston speaking about the psychology of the blind, but he did support psychological and mental testing. He seldom spoke about social adjustment in the abstract, but he carried through a building program that offered more homelike surroundings for the pupils. He never talked about "blindisms" and their effect on the acceptance of blind persons in society, but he encouraged a vigorous physical education program to improve posture and develop muscular tone. Sometimes, because of his pragmatism, Robert Woolston was looked upon as little more than a builder of dormitories and dining halls, as being more concerned with things than with people, but the warm regard that graduates and former students of the school had for him, and the continuing interest they had in the welfare of the school was due in large part to his quiet concern for the welfare of every child that came under his care.



The admission of students, the very problem of locating them so that they could be admitted, was eased somewhat in the years after 1920. In 1917 a law was passed requiring that all educable children must be placed in a school of some kind. Partly to enforce this law, the Department of Public Welfare, at Woolston's request, appointed two social workers who were to visit in every county, contact local officials and then call on parents and guardians of blind children. They advised them how to care for pre-school youngsters, whether they should enroll them in the school at Jacksonville or enter them in a program in their own community. A second responsibility of the social workers was to visit the homes after the children were enrolled in the Jacksonville school and assist parents in continuing during vacations the activities that had been begun at the school. Finally, the social workers were to aid graduates and former students to find employment, and to help in adjusting to the new situation. Unfortunately these "social workers" became political appointees, and educational qualifications were ignored, so that they did not fulfill completely the responsibilities placed upon them. It was



not until the 1950's that an effective social service department was introduced into the school.



In the school for the blind there was a continuing awareness of the necessity of providing a full and active life for the pupils. Until the 1930's what organized activities there were centered in the physical education program. During the 1920's and 1930's the physical education department was headed by Miss Edith Gillogly, a young woman who had taught at a state girls' school, and had attended courses at teachers college. She brought to her work a gay and lively spirit, and she aroused much enthusiasm among her pupils. In the fashion of the times in nearly all schools and colleges, she organized spring festivals that included dances and gymnastic exercises. A typical program was that held on Friday evening, May 4, 1928:

Combination Drill.....	Boys, lower grades
Indian Clubs, Dumb Bells, Wands	
Stuyvesant Dance.....	Girls, grades 6 and 7
Mimetic Exercises.....	Boys, grades 7 and 8
Warming Up	Standing Broad Jump
Medicine Ball Throw	Throwing Life Buoy
Tennis	Rowing
Golf	Catcher
Dumb Bell Drill.....	Girls, high school
Russian Dance.....	Boys, high school
Figure Marching.....	Girls, lower grades
Wand Exercise.....	Girls, grades 6 and 7
Indian Clubs.....	Boys, high school
Bunny Dance.....	Girls, grades 2 and 3
Marching.....	Girls, high school
Apparatus.....	Boys, all grades
Parallel Bars	Horse
Horizontal Bars	Rings
Rope Climb	Pole Climb
Dance "Hornpipe".....	Girls, high school

In the 1930's the gymnasium demonstration came to be given as a part of a May Day pageant like those in many schools for the sighted. The preparation and presentation of these festivities occupied a considerable part of the time of pupils outside of the class-

room in the spring semester, and being partly recreational, contributed importantly to the social program. They were discontinued during the second world war. Miss Gillogly (later Mrs. Homer Nowatski) was responsible for other recreational activities such as hikes and picnics which were popular in the spring and fall. In the first dozen years of her career she taught both boys and girls gymnasium classes. When she came in 1920, she was no older than some of the big boys in the school, and as such fellows often do, they tried to give her a hazing. She tells the story that in her first class when she was conducting military drill, she became confused and the boys continued marching right up to the wall. But some of the boys helped her out, and the crisis was overcome. As one of the participants in the affair said later, the boys recognized that she was devoted to their well-being, and gave so generously of her time and talents that she got the loyalty and cooperation of everyone.

An important adjunct to the physical education program was a swimming pool, completed in 1930 at a cost of \$40,000. It was twenty-six by fifty-two feet and three to six feet in depth. When it was opened to use, Miss Gillogly took on the teaching of swimming, although she had no experience. She was aided by an Illinois College student, and soon the pupils were being given Red Cross water safety and lifesaving training. A number of young people qualified for Junior Lifesaving Certificates, a practice later discontinued by the Red Cross. In 1930 the first swimming team was organized and competed with Y. M. C. A. teams in nearby cities. One of the members of the swimming team was David Stevens, a farm boy who had learned to swim before he entered the school, but received the Red Cross training. He was given a medal by the Prairie Farms Company (a large cooperative dairy) for rescuing a boy from the Sangamon River during summer vacation.

Miss Gillogly, in a paper presented to the American Association of Instructors of the Blind in 1934, said that swimming was good for the blind, because it was an activity in which they could compete on an equal basis with the seeing, and because it developed self-confidence, independence, coordination, and rhythm. She also pointed out that much of the instruction had to be on a one-to-one basis, and that group teaching was not effective with beginning swimmers.

Almost all gymnastics and swimming took place in late afternoons. Students remember the physical exhaustion that attended such hard exercise after an otherwise full day of classes, workshop, and music practice. From the standpoint of teachers and administrators, however, such a full day was good because it kept pupils from engaging in undesirable recreation. But it didn't really work,

according to stories told by alumni when reminiscing at their gatherings. One story is about entering the steampipe tunnels that ran from the power house to the dormitories and the main building. Although the boys were often tired already, and the tunnels were hot and dangerous, such an escapade was a great adventure, especially because it was possible to pass from the boys' dormitories on the east side of the campus to those of the girls on the west side!

The monotony of the daily routine of classes was relieved by such extra-curricular activities as the meetings of the literary societies, whose origin is hidden, but whose doings were occasionally reported in the School News section of the *Illinois Braille Messenger*. The boys' society, the Lyceum of Amateurs, had been abandoned in 1927, but was revived in 1931 by Mr. Dale W. Hamilton, a teacher in the high school. The girls' first literary organization was the Philomathean Society, which also was founded at an unknown date and died out, to be replaced in 1931 by the Fortnightly Literary Society, which also ceased to exist, but was reorganized in 1934 again under the name of the Philomathean Society. The L. O. A. and the Philomathean were conducted in the manner of literary societies organized in the nineteenth century in high schools and colleges, and still existing at a few institutions, notably at Illinois College and MacMurray College in Jacksonville. They presented programs in which the members wrote and read essays, engaged in debates, recited poetry and read literary selections. Occasionally the school for the blind societies staged debates before the student body on matters of public interest. Another program was a simulated broadcast of school news in the manner of the popular radio program, "The March of Time." The Philomatheans entertained at chapel, also, and in 1937 they gave a program on Christmas customs throughout the world. The literary societies also had picnics and parties for their members.

Another popular activity was Scouting. The boys' troop was organized in 1934 (the date is uncertain), and the girls' troop in 1931. The boys' program, since expanded to include cubs and explorers, has been maintained with only one or two lapses. Girl scouting has also continued, but in recent years, the girls have become members of troops out in Jacksonville. Scouting was always encouraged by educators of the blind because it offered an opportunity for visually handicapped children to engage in activities with sighted children. Hikes, camporees, cook-outs, summer camp, and exhibitions were all open to blind scouts.

The most significant development in the social life of the students at the Illinois School for the Blind occurred at Christmas time in



1933, when, for the first time boys and girls were allowed to attend mixed parties. The high school pupils took over the playroom and sun parlors of the grade school girls' cottage. Fourteen card tables were set up and progressive games were played. It was a carefully planned and chaperoned party, and several teachers were present to coach the pupils and keep score. Mr. Woolston visited during the evening, and his wife and Miss Brooks, the school principal, served refreshments of ice cream and cake. A few days later a similar party was held for the boys and girls of the seventh and eighth grades. The primary and elementary grades also had parties at which simple gifts were distributed. During the spring semester of 1934 a program of social training was introduced, and parties were again held for the seventh and eighth grades and the high school. The children were taught how to conduct themselves at social gatherings and were instructed in dancing. The culmination of the program was a formal dance held in the gymnasium at which a band from Jacksonville High School played. The grand march was led by Mr. and Mrs. Woolston.

No one ever gave a formal explanation for the relaxation of the strict segregation by sexes, but we remember that after the first world war there was a general liberalization of social customs, and the mingling of boys and girls at the Illinois school was but a reflection of the movement. At the same time there was a new understanding of what made for a sound mind in a healthy body. This was indicated by the remarks of Miss Brooks on the subject of mental hygiene as they were recorded at a meeting of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind. At the time she said that mental hygiene worked toward the prevention of mental illness, and its goal was a developed personality so that the child could share in the similar ideas and abilities of others, along with "an attitude of joyous response to the life situation that either does, or can be made to, afford happiness." She cited the work of Thomas D. Cutforth, a pioneer in studying the psychology of the blind, who said that children needed relief from fatigue, and need to escape from the fears and anxieties that were aroused by their blindness by engaging in a program of social and recreational value. Miss Brooks especially deplored the practice of segregation by sex, saying that it "resulted in a lack of social training which seemed to discriminate against blindness, and a source of later unsocial attitudes." The principal concluded her talk by stating the aims of the social program at the Illinois School for the Blind:

If we can develop a school program of sufficient variety to give

all educable blind children a working basis for the development of personality while they acquire the tools of education, considering the many patterns of individual ability presented; if we can avoid the regressive withdrawing social tendencies; if we can pry the dreamer out of his fantasies into an active school life . . . and teach them to live happily as social members of a social group, we shall have done much to accomplish the purpose of mental hygiene.

In fact it is quite possible that it was Miss Brooks who led the way to the broader social life of the students, but of course she received the support of Mr. Woolston. It is also probable that the strict chaperonage was because he would go no further than he thought other friends and critics of the school would go. Aspects of segregation of the sexes remained for some years; many classes were wholly male or wholly female, so was seating in the dining room, and all contacts not carefully supervised were still very limited. There was still a general belief that the blind should not be encouraged to marry, but this was breaking down, and a saner and more scientific view of the inheritance of blindness was coming in. It would not be until the 1960's that the social atmosphere of the school itself would be like that of the public schools.

In addition to the social affairs such as have been described it was still the custom to have special recognition of the religious holidays of Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving. These were occasions when special musical programs were given, and of course the music students enjoyed the excitement of preparation and performance. But, in keeping with the times, the secular aspects of these occasions received added emphasis with the appearance of Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and the broad-hatted Pilgrim. In 1940, for example, the school correspondent for the *Braille Messenger* noted that there had been the usual round of pre-Christmas activities; the classrooms were appropriately decorated, and in the cottages there were parties and gift exchanges, often conducted by Santa himself. Just before the children left for the holidays an all-school party was held in the auditorium, carols were sung, and Santa Claus, said to have arrived by airplane, handed out small gifts supplied by the local Lions Club.

The social situation in the school was strongly changed as the automobile came into use, and as hard roads were built. Parents now called for their children, and visited with teachers and house parents. The latter learned something of the home situation, and so were better able to counsel the children. The children felt closer to their homes, and entered more fully into the life of the school

because the sense of separation was not so keen. Not all children went home by automobile, and special cars were operated on the Alton railroad to take children to Chicago and to the southern part of the state. "Travel day," or as pupils often called it, "going home day," was always one of excitement and happy anticipation for most pupils.

Other traditional holidays such as Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's day, Halloween, and Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays, and Armistice Day were also the occasion for parties and celebrations. The most elaborate of the patriotic occasions was the pageant staged during the bicentennial observance in 1932 of the birth of Washington. In 1938 Washington's Birthday was observed by a mock session of the Continental Congress, and the gymnasium teacher trained a Revolutionary Army of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders in uniform under the command of General Washington himself!

The expanded social program was also a recognition of the responsibility of the school, because it was residential, to create as homelike an atmosphere as possible. Managing Officer Woolston saw this very clearly. During the period 1930-1947 there was much building and renovation to make school rooms, dormitories, and dining facilities meet the standards of the twentieth century, although not much could be done with the main building itself. At his recommendation, the legislature appropriated money for new cottages that would house students in two units of twenty-five or so. Not only were the old accommodations in the main building strictly dormitory in character, but the fact that the structure itself was not fireproof, made it urgent that better housing be provided. Mr. Woolston had been concerned over the matter because one of his earliest experiences was when he had charge of a dormitory over the chapel in which small boys were quartered. He said that on his first night he slept little for fear that some boys would fall out of the window to the concrete walk thirty feet below.

Until new accommodations could be provided, the main building, the older girl's cottage, and the grade school cottage, were kept painted, and new floors and plumbing fixtures were added as needed. In 1922-23 a new generator was installed (still in use on a standby basis in 1970), and new lighting fixtures were put in. In the same year the first of the modern cottages was completed. It had bedrooms for two or three girls, sleeping porches, guest rooms, and quarters for the supervisors and the housekeepers. In style it was modified Georgian (sometimes called colonial), popular on college campuses and institutional grounds in the 1920's and 1930's. It



was a very good style, of tapestried brick, with equal-spaced, small paned windows, and stone sills. Doorway treatment used small stone frames and simple architraves.

In 1925 and 1926, a similar cottage was erected for boys, and screened porches were added to the girls' cottage so that children could play outdoors in bad weather. In the same year another cottage for little girls was completed. Thus the girls had three cottages, including the first one for older girls built in 1889, and there was one cottage for boys. Further building was delayed by the coming of the depression in 1929, but was resumed in 1936 with United States government (PWA) funds. Two new cottages for boys were also in two units each, providing for twenty-five pupils, for a total of 100. They were in the same Georgian style as the other cottages, and with their occupation, all students were removed from the main building.

Additional construction during the 1930's and early 1940's included swimming pool, the renovation of the gymnasium, the enlargement and improvement of the hospital building, the removal of the power house that was in the rear of the main building to a site on the north boundary, and the erection of a modern dining room and kitchen on the site. The power house was alongside the Wabash Railroad tracks, and thus coal could be brought in by railroad cars. In this structure was a modern boiler to generate steam for heating, and to produce hot water for cooking. Sometime in the late 1930's the institution ceased to make its own electricity and bought it from the newly established Jacksonville municipal system.

Construction of the new dining hall was begun in 1940. Although there were delays because of the national defense effort, it was completed and in use in September, 1941. Woolston said that it was a beautiful building of one hundred by fifty-six feet, with entrances on the south, east, and west, with a green terrazo floor, and yellow ceramic tile on the walls up to six feet and grey artificial stone blocks above. At the northwest corner was an employees dining room with a separate entrance.

To the north of the building was the bakery, and adjoining it were the kitchen, vegetable room, service room, and cold storage area. In the basement were general storage rooms. The space in the main building formerly occupied by the dining room was converted into an auditorium, but because of the defense program, and following it, the conversion to a war-time economy for the second world war, its completion was postponed. It was not until 1951 that this improvement was in final form.

With the occupation of the dining hall, Mr. Woolston's building

program was practically completed, and the campus remained essentially the same for the next twenty years. On the east side of the grounds were three Georgian cottages for boys, and on the west were two of the same style and one of Victorian design for the girls. To the north of the girl's cottage was the hospital, a plain red brick building of no particular style. The main building, with its forty-two classrooms and music practice rooms, its offices, and staff living quarters, was on the south side of the campus facing East State Street. The dining hall to the north of the main building was about equidistant between the boys' and girls' sides. Further to the north were the buildings housing the circulating library, the printing shop, the laundry, and the carpenter shop. On the northern boundary were the power house, garages, and other structures used by the maintenance force.

As the buildings were completed, the area around them was landscaped with trees and flowering shrubs. Plants and flowers for cutting were raised in a small greenhouse at the rear of the hospital. The campus was conveniently arranged, green and attractive, and we may be sure that Mr. Woolston looked upon it with pride. At a later date there was criticism of the dormitory and dining arrangements as being units that were too large to follow adequately a cottage plan. But Mr. Woolston at various times pointed out that the student body was divided into comparatively small groups of about twenty-five or thirty pupils, since all but the older girls' cottage were divided into two units. Further, there were no large dormitories, and a considerable degree of privacy was provided by the small bedrooms. Also there were sitting rooms and enclosed porches that provided recreational areas. It seems probable that the ideal cottage system, such as was built at Perkins, was recognized as desirable, but the realities of financing it by legislative appropriations precluded such expensive construction. It must also be remembered that the 1920's, when the first dormitories were put up, was a period of rising prices, and then in the 1930's, the depression caused a falling off in the amount of taxes that could be collected. At no time was there any opportunity for other than an economical building program. When all these matters are taken into account, the Illinois School for the Blind provided as good quarters as did any school in the country. A reading of the *Proceedings* of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind for the period indicates that only Perkins Institution and Pennsylvania school for the blind at Overbrook had complete cottage systems, and the latter, while divided into separate units, was under one roof.

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The academic program of the Illinois School for the Blind continued to parallel that of the public schools. In 1932, for example, a comprehensive report on the curriculum showed that the kindergarten had as its aim the development of personal appearance, health, courtesy, speech, conversation, and cooperation in play. Physical coordination was developed by participation in rhythm bands, and by the manipulation of toys and simple tools. Attention was also given to creating in pupils an interest in their environment, and to encouraging them to react to their fellows and to their surroundings. In grades one and two the aims of the kindergarten were the same, but reading and writing of braille and number work were added. In grades three to six there was formal teaching of language, arithmetic, history, geography, and spelling along with continued attention to braille. Boys and girls were segregated in grades three to eight, with two grades to a room, although in the upper grades there was a degree of departmentalization, and the teaching of subject matter was divided among the teachers. In the high school, boys and girls were in the same classes, and teachers were engaged according to their competence to teach particular courses. The curriculum was arranged by subject matter:

English: first year, Rhetoric; second, American Literature; third and fourth, Advanced Composition and Classics.

History: English, first year; Greek and Roman, third; and American History and Civics, fourth year.

Mathematics: Algebra and Geometry

Science: General Science, Physiology, Botany, and Physics.

Language: Latin through Caesar.

To meet the needs of children, who, because of an eye injury, or for other reasons, transferred from public schools to the school for the blind, two "classified" rooms were provided. Here the children were taught braille and otherwise prepared to take their places in graded classes.

At this time (1932) there were thirty-four full-time teachers in all departments—music, academic, vocational; two-thirds of the principal's time was spent in teaching, and there were four part-time teachers. Classes met for forty minute periods, five days a week, with academic work ending at 2:10 o'clock. There were some periods for music and handicraft or industrial classes in the morning, but most of them were held in the afternoon.

The years 1931 and 1932 were a period in which there were changes in the curriculum and in teaching methods. The changes



were partly inspired by a three week institute conducted on the campus by the American Foundation for the Blind. More will be said about it later, but other innovations came from general advances made in pedagogy for all schools. Among the new things was the Dalton plan, which was adapted to a class in algebra, in which teaching was on an individual basis, with pupils allowed to proceed at their own speed. Also the teaching of spelling was reorganized, new grade school texts in arithmetic and language were introduced, biology as a separate course was offered in the high school, and nature study was given in the fifth and sixth grades. Children with poor coordination who had difficulty with the slate and stylus were taught to use Minerva writers, small light weight machines made in Germany. They did not prove very successful, and their use was later discontinued; there are some of the machines in the Historical Room.

One of the results of the American Foundation for the Blind institute was the increased use of diagnostic and intelligence tests. Psychological and intelligence testing was introduced at the Illinois School for the Blind in the years 1926-1928. Such testing for sighted persons had long been done, and the Binet-Stanford I. Q. tests were well-known. A beginning to adapt these tests to blind children was made by Robert B. Irwin, a teacher of the blind in the Cleveland public schools. His work was continued and greatly amplified by Samuel P. Hays, a consultant on testing at the Perkins and Pennsylvania institutions. Hays standardized the tests, which were first used to determine the level of ability in reading and writing braille. Hays reported on his work to the American Association of Instructors of the Blind in 1920 and frequently thereafter. He and others felt that testing blind children served a useful purpose because it could be determined when a child needed special help, and it enabled the teacher to note improvement. Testing was also helpful in vocational guidance.

A second development in the curriculum of the lower grades at the Illinois school was its organization around the social studies, a movement common to schools for the sighted during the 1930's and 1940's. In 1937-1938, for example, a social studies project for the kindergarten-primary department was that of a fruit stand, "so common on our highways." The children were taken to visit a real stand, and the proprietor and the teachers discussed with them "the building, size, care, labor, sources of supply, profits and losses, courtesy, appreciation, and interdependence. The children were allowed to handle many kinds of fruits and vegetables, the cooling apparatus, heater, radio, telephone, scales, and cash register."

A fruit stand was built in the classroom with the children doing the planning and some of the construction. They also made models of fruit, candy bars, etc., and a toy telephone and toy cash register were installed. The children made signs, using braille, thus teaching spelling, writing and counting. When December came, the fruit stand became a toy shop, and later it was a post office, dairy, flower shop, and a bus depot—each new phase being introduced by a field trip.

What had been gained? First of all a healthy, happy experience for these children. They had found self-expression and learned to cooperate and play fair with others, and their vocabularies had been greatly enlarged. All the elementary curriculum was closely related in this one progressive unit. History, transportation, geography, different localities of supplies, science, the planting, growing and manufacturing of supplies, electricity, water power, mathematics, safety, traffic rules and regulations. Dramatic play, art, modeling, construction, and courtesy in dealing with others.

Another concept from educational research of the period that was applied was "reading readiness," that is, the idea that chronological age was not necessarily the same as the age for learning to read. By testing methods, the "readiness" of pupils to read was determined, thus individualizing instruction.

A new teacher, Mrs. Norma Reid was closely associated with the new trends in kindergarten-primary work. Mrs. Reid remained for thirty-one years and became an authority on the teaching of small children. Among her many contributions was the conduct of Christmas and Easter assembly programs, and her dramatic skill and personal attention to costumes and staging resulted in memorable performances as well as the personal development of the youngsters.

In the seventh and eighth grades (not then called junior high school), the emphasis was placed on subject matter, and the term "enrichment" was used. As Mr. Woolston wrote,

In line with the many trends for widening opportunity for all people of the country, a program of continuance in the educational work of this school is now in preparation. Its essential feature is to give each pupil as much time in the school as is necessary for him to take advantage of every educational facility which the school offers, and to restrict none through necessity of choice of what can be crowded into a four year period. This will

demand a reclassification of the entire high school for next year, together with grades seven and eight. In support of this program, the printing house is busily seeking new materials for enriching the curriculum of the schools for the blind throughout the country.

Nothing more was said about enrichment, and it is doubtful whether much change was made in the traditional four-year pattern. What probably happened was that supplementary reading materials became much greater, so that it was not as necessary to stick completely to the textbook.

The curriculum in the grades was strongly influenced by the guides that were issued by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Chief among these was the *Illinois Curriculum and Course of Study Guide for Elementary Schools* issued in 1945. It was prepared by a committee of school teachers and educators in colleges, and it followed closely the results of various studies made by the National Education Association. It had as its objectives that the children "achieve self-realization, be aware of human relationships, be concerned for economic efficiency, and accept civic responsibilities."

At the school for the blind, therefore, the objective of the kindergarten and primary department was said to be the adjustment of pupils to a "new and expanded environment," and social adjustment to other people than the family, and adjustment to the routine of the school. At the same time "personal development" (self-realization) was provided for by learning to read and write, and by giving opportunities for self-expression through creative crafts and by allowing free play. For the elementary grades the objectives were pretty much the same, but emphasis was placed upon the mastery of subject matter as essential to the development and self-realization of the individual. Also, it was said that the school room provided an "excellent place for the formation of good, acceptable personal traits."

As noted above, the high school curriculum was enriched to achieve the general objective of self-realization. The curriculum of 1947-1948, for example, noted that the following courses were offered and that there was a limited number of elective courses:

English: Rhetoric, American Literature, English Literature, Senior English

Languages: French and Latin

Mathematics: Algebra, Geometry, General Mathematics

Science: Physics, Biology



Social Studies: Economic Geography, Modern History, U. S. History

Another reason, aside from enrichment, that a broader choice was offered was to prepare students better to go to college. For some years ISB graduates had been accepted as freshmen in colleges on the same basis as those from other high schools. Four or five, sometimes more, of the graduates each year went to college, the number increasing after 1925 when the state legislature gave financial aid up to \$300 a year to provide readers and other assistance with college work. To administer these funds, a Board of Higher Education was appointed, with Woolston as a member. By 1928 there were twenty-eight graduates enrolled in colleges in Illinois. This, of course, was in line with a national trend in the 1920's for more young people to go to college, rather than to consider high school graduation the termination of their schooling.

The interest that the Illinois School for the Blind took in curricular matters is evidenced further by the participation of the teachers in the programs of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind. For example, Mrs. Woolston led a round table discussion on elementary school education in 1932. At the same session, Dale W. Hamilton, a teacher in the high school, read a paper at the round table on teaching science. Hamilton talked about the question of whether the laboratory method was suitable in schools for the blind. He held that the system of putting laboratory manuals in the hands of students was not satisfactory because the student usually went through the motions of conducting an experiment, and simply recorded the results as indicated in the manual. Hamilton thought that students learned more when the instructor gave a demonstration-lecture, using apparatus designed so that the experiment and its results could be comprehended, not by sight, but with the other senses. The use of such devices as earphones on galvanometers to measure electrical current, and of buzzers to register the height to which liquids arose in tubes were recommended. Hamilton declared that the success of science teaching rested on the ingenuity of the teacher in devising lectures and demonstrations that could be understood by sound and touch and smell; even if a school was not as well equipped as most, and only water and sink, and gas for heating were provided, teaching could be successful. Hamilton created his own apparatus, but he was also well-supplied with equipment that accompanied the textbooks printed by the American Printing House for the Blind. He was also able to obtain material from commercial businessmen. Hamilton was a good

teacher, even though he did not advocate the independent performance of experiments by students; he held their attention, and they participated in the demonstrations with him, because he used devices that helped them to understand clearly what was going on.

In 1934 Hamilton again presented a paper, "What Science Teaching is Advisable in Our High School Departments?" He said that at the Illinois School for the Blind physics was not given because available equipment was meager, and there were no textbooks (a situation later remedied), but he did advocate the teaching of general science with emphasis on scientific principles such as would be given in a physics course. Hamilton recommended that biology be taught saying that it was especially valuable to blind children, and as given at the Illinois school, it emphasized (1) "modes of living of plants and animals and their economic effects," and (2) those topics which had "implications for human welfare." Among the subjects considered were patent medicines and quacks, inheritance and eugencies, and internal secretions of the glands and sex hormones. When the latter was discussed, the girls in the classroom were excused.

In 1934 another teacher, Leo J. Flood, was a member of the section on languages at the American Association of Instructors of the Blind, and he read a paper, "The Value of Latin in Schools for the Blind." He sent a questionnaire to other schools, and found that Latin was taught in twenty-one, and was compulsory in twelve of these. Fifteen had two years of the subject, four had three, and two, four years. Illinois School for the Blind offered two years, with Caesar's *Gallic Wars* being studied in the second year. Flood used the braille textbook edition of Caesar that was published by the American Printing House, but said that supplementary readings on Roman life were greatly desired so that students would get a better background for beginning Caesar's commentary. Flood found that his pupils who had not attained good speed in reading braille had especial difficulty in reading Latin, particularly Caesar.

Flood gave the usual arguments for teaching Latin—it was helpful in understanding allusions in English literature, in defining English words, and in understanding English grammar. He concluded that schools for the blind should continue to teach Latin because they strove to provide the best possible education. He said, "Pupils without sight need not only the practical education furnished by vocational subjects, but it is even more important that they should have the broad training afforded by a liberal and cultural education in order that they may enjoy richer and fuller lives as a result of their reflective thinking."

Geography and map study were always strong points in the curriculum at the Illinois School for the Blind. Stemming from Frank Hall's interest in the subject and his development of a machine for embossing maps, the printing department continued to produce a variety of maps that were used in the classes and were sold to other schools. Miss Elizabeth Brooks, the principal of the school, wrote an article for the *Illinois Braille Messenger* on the equipment available for teaching geography. She said that the subject was a basic science, and so was introduced early in the curriculum and continued through the high school. The greatly complicated situation in international affairs that followed the first world war, and the frequent mention of far away places in the newspapers and over radio, made necessary an enlarged knowledge of geography. At the Illinois school the teaching of geography began in the primary grades when the child learned to read a map of the school grounds on which were represented the buildings and other physical objects. Then, in the elementary grades, children were introduced to maps of Jacksonville, and finally to maps of Illinois, the United States, and the world. To facilitate the teaching of geography, the printing department produced a desk atlas of combined physical and political maps for each continent, and sectional maps for the United States and for Illinois. Work with the desk atlases was supplemented by a large dissected wood relief map of the United States and similar maps for the continents of the world. The particular virtue of the new maps made in the printing shop was that each contained a proper amount of information for the size used. The atlas was thirteen by seventeen inches and was in sufficiently small sections so that embossed features could be readily distinguished by touch.

As we review the details of the curriculum we are aware, first, that the attempt to parallel that of the schools for the sighted was generally successful, and second, that the graduates of the school, and even those who attended for lesser periods, received a superior academic education. Alumni of the school who were interviewed in 1970 were unanimous in saying that their years in school fitted them very well for the careers they followed after they left. The fact that an increasing number of graduates went on to attend college attested to the quality of the education. At the same time, the emphasis on the academic course may be criticized because it benefited most those who stayed until graduation from high school, and this number was small compared to the number who attended. The graduating classes were seldom larger than ten or twelve, and the total enrollment was around 225-250, which meant roughly that only



one-half of the number entering kindergarten graduated from high school. This number would be raised somewhat if those who entered in the later grades because of eye injury were taken into account.

Superintendent Woolston and his staff, however, were well aware of the problem, but the academic program was mandatory for every student, because even the "backward" child could gain something from attending classes in science, social studies, and reading. These "backward" children, and even those who were normal, but were not inclined to be interested in books, would not go on to college or find employment in intellectual occupations. They would have to use their hands in some sort of clerical or mechanical job. Therefore, the number of crafts or skills that were taught to the pupils was enlarged. In addition to broom and brushmaking, chair caning, and piano tuning, there were classes in typing and dictaphone operation, weaving, basketry, furniture upholstering, fiber furniture making, and telephone switchboard operation. In addition, woodworking (sloyd) continued to be important as a means of hand training, and pupils were started in the shop at an early age.

In 1929 the school assumed more responsibility for securing jobs for those students who were not bound for college. By means of aptitude testing, and on the basis of success in handicrafts, pupils were encouraged to specialize in the senior year in those crafts which would be most useful in getting employment. A survey of job possibilities was made, and it was determined that the piano factories of the state could use four or five new tuners each year, and that several businesses in Chicago were willing to employ dictaphone operators. Other pupils were encouraged to go back to their home communities and open shops where they would make brooms and brushes, cane chairs, make mattresses, and upholster furniture. To aid them in their efforts, attention was paid to the teaching of business methods and salesmanship.

Telephone switchboard operation instruction was begun in 1929 when an agreement was made with Carl Wiley, a graduate of the school who had been employed at the Jacksonville State Hospital since 1919, to teach students and place them in jobs. It was possible for him and other blind persons to operate the maze of wires, switches, and jacks, because each of the latter was identified by a small brass plate upon which braille characters were embossed. The operator knew when a call came in because Wiley had invented a device that caused an audible click, and upon hearing it, he felt along the row of jacks until he felt a small celluloid disk that dropped down. The caller then gave the line he wanted to be connected with, and the operator felt along the line of brailled plates

below the jacks, and thus located the proper connection. At this period switchboards were used only for internal communication; there was no connection for outgoing calls, and persons making such calls used a telephone connected directly to the central exchange.

Under Wiley's tutelage, other ISB students were trained and placed in state institutions until thirty persons were in service. Their jobs were threatened, however, because the Bell Telephone Company made a new switchboard that substituted lights for the little celluloid disks, and now the operator could not hear when a call came in. But Hubert Watson, a graduate of ISB who was an operator at the school for the mentally retarded children at Lincoln, Illinois, came to the rescue. He was mechanically gifted and well acquainted with electrical matters as well, and in 1934 he invented a device containing small solenoids or electromagnets to be attached to the switchboard. Now when a light went on the proper solenoid in a box placed by the board where the operator's hand could rest was activated. A little plunger came up, and by feeling the brailled identification by it, the operator knew where the call was coming in, and could make the proper connections. As new switchboards were installed, the Watson Touch System was attached, and so blind operators could continue to be employed.

At first the Watson Touch System devices were made by Watson with the assistance of Hobart G. Stephenson, the teacher of piano tuning at the Illinois school. Mr. Woolston, always interested in increasing employment opportunities for graduates, made available the money to buy supplies and tools with which to make the device. The principal operation was to wind the wire on the solenoids, and Stephenson adapted an ordinary sewing machine to do this work. Through working with the electromagnets, both Watson and Stephenson became interested in electronics, and both became technicians. Stephenson was often called upon to regulate the church organs in the community which were also operated by electrical devices. He later became interested in radio, and owned commercial stations, the first one in Jacksonville itself. Watson became proficient in the repair and maintenance of radios and other electronic equipment, and was an instructor of the blind employed by the government after World War II. The Bell Telephone Company eventually took over the manufacture of Watson's device, and it came into use all over the United States. Watson never patented the system, but donated it to the good of his fellow blind men, and the Bell company manufactured and installed it at cost.

Watson and others hoped that a large field of employment would thus open up in private business, but because of the increased rental

charged by the telephone company for switchboards equipped with it, businessmen found it cheaper to hire only sighted operators. The field of switchboard operation, therefore, continued to be confined mostly to public institutions. But the latter provided enough jobs to justify continuing to teach it at the Illinois School for the Blind. At the school itself there was a succession of graduates who were operators. Of longest tenure was Paul Stewart, who began in 1938, and after his death in 1952, his widow, Rosalie, took his place. She continues as senior operator in 1970 and also has the responsibility of teaching students. In the 1960's when new compact cordless switchboards came into use, the Watson Touch System was supplanted by a photo-electric cell in a pointer or probe attached to a transistorized oscillator. When a light flashed, the oscillator was activated, and with the probe, the operator located the particular light and threw a switch. In 1970 a cordless switchboard with the photo-electric probe was installed at the Illinois school, and it appeared that switchboard operation would continue as a career for blind persons.

Piano tuning and repair was another craft that received much attention, although the wide use of the phonograph in the 1920's, the coming of the radio in the 1930's, as well as the depression of the latter period, and the war and its aftermath in the 1940's, did reduce the number of manufacturers engaged in the making of pianos, and the number sold annually. But Hobart Stephenson declared that there were still a great many pianos in homes, and that there was still a steady, though reduced, sale of pianos. He urged that tuners go into business for themselves, although there were difficulties to overcome. Transportation must be provided, and he was speaking at a time (the 1940's) when streetcar lines were being cut in the cities, because of the increased use of automobiles. Further, he said that tuners must overcome the timidity that was common to many blind men. They must learn to be friendly and socially alert. But he said that the monetary reward from private tuning could be much greater than from a job in a piano factory—if one could be found.

Another occupation that opened up in the 1930's was that of operating vending stands in state-owned and private office buildings at which newspapers, tobacco, and convenience items would be sold. To help students prepare for this occupation, the school offered classes in commercial law and salesmanship, and the Alumni Association Trust Fund loaned the capital which was needed to start into business.

The school continued to recognize its responsibility for placing



in jobs graduates and students who left before graduation. To make them aware of the vocations open to them, and to especially prepare them, a vocational guidance course in "Occupations" was added in 1936. It was recognized that it was difficult to find suitable jobs for persons, but the school did what it could, and kept a register of former students so that they could be notified if openings occurred. Also during the 1920's and 1930's, students who graduated were permitted to come back for two years, sometimes more, to prepare themselves for some vocation. Dictaphone stenography and typing, and switchboard operation were frequently learned in this way.

During the depression years the scarcity of money in the families of many students created a desire by sons and daughters to contribute to family funds. Since the school taught basketry, leather working (the making of belts and other small objects), chair caning, the making of rubber mats from old automobile tires, brush and broom making, and so on, it was possible for boys to make and sell these objects during the summer. One young man earned \$60 by making and selling leather belts, and another lad, only eleven years old, earned \$16. Altogether, in the summer of 1938, twenty boys earned from \$6 to \$60 dollars each. So successful were the boys that girls, too, were allowed to learn leather working, chair caning, and brush making.

Changing times brought changing vocational and handicraft interests. The coming of the automobile made the horse fly net obsolete, but it created a need for auto mechanics, and some instruction in the theory of internal combustion engines and practice in their repair was given. Door mats made from strips of old automobile tires replaced those made of jute fiber, and the introduction of player pianos brought new challenges to piano tuners and repair men. The theory of radios and their repair was taught by Hobart Stephenson, who made himself an expert in electronics and radio engineering.

Superintendent Woolston stated the aims and hopes for vocational education:

With guidance and counselling, plus placement, and a careful follow-up program in the vocational guidance courses we hope to open new fields and new positions for the students. This can be done only with the cooperation of society in general, who must be educated to the fact that blind young men and women are qualified and able to do their work well. With something to do, some way of making a living, they become real members of the community.

In vocational preparation and guidance, boys received the most attention. Some girls found employment as switchboard operators, and as stenographers and typists, but the greatest emphasis was on domestic science and handcrafts. While beadmaking was no longer taught, girls still learned basketry, crocheting, knitting, and hand and machine sewing. In the high school, as in the public schools, these handcrafts were included in formal courses in clothing and textiles, in which the selection and care of fabrics and dress design and construction were taught. We have noted that cooking had been taught from about 1905, but by the 1940's this had evolved into organized courses in foods, their preparation and serving, and modern equipment was provided in rooms in the main building. It is significant that these courses in homemaking were expanded, and that the feeling against the marriage of blind girls and boys to each other was gradually breaking down. At the same time girls were taught these skills, as they had always been, with the idea that they would return to live with their families, and thus would be able to contribute to home life.



Music at the Illinois School for the Blind in the period 1920 to 1947 continued to play an important part in the total program, with five or six teachers (at one time there were eight) giving lessons on piano, organ, violin, and other instruments. There were the usual opportunities for performance at Christmas, Easter and Commencement, and student and faculty recitals. The spring concert, the May Day festivals, and visits of the governor or other distinguished guests were also occasions for musical performance. The school still permitted pupils who had graduated to come back for additional work, and thus the quality of music was on a rather high level, although there were complaints that the increasing number of "backward" children tended to prevent the achievements of former years. Mr. Woolston, however, held to the traditional, and not very realistic view, that "many blind children are particularly gifted in music," and that it "appeals to children in an unusual way."

In the 1920's the music department continued to be called a "conservatory of music." Therefore formal instruction in harmony and theory continued, and some graduates went on to take advanced work at conservatories and became professional musicians and teachers. At the same time, the numbers of these students, in relation to all those taking music, was very small.

The curriculum revision that took place in the 1930's brought about a new relation of the music department to the total school

program. We have noted that the teaching of music as part of the work in the kindergarten and grades one to six was introduced in the classroom, and textbooks such as were used in the public schools were brailled. For several years this "public school music" was taught by the classroom teachers. But, in 1932, the responsibility for it was assumed by the teachers in the music department. From this beginning, the music program became more like that in schools for the sighted, except that lessons on piano were offered, as well as on strings and wind instruments. All of these were on a voluntary basis, and only students with a personal desire, or because of pressure from their parents, took lessons. Enough pupils did become proficient in playing instruments to constitute a satisfactory orchestra of sixteen to twenty performers. By the 1940's the formal classes in theory and harmony were dropped, but the elements of these subjects were included in the music classes for the fifth and sixth grades, and, on an individual basis, to advanced piano and instrumental students. Because vocal music was the basis for music in the elementary grades, the interest in singing was aroused, and the natural follow-up was to develop strong groups—boys' chorus, girls' glee club, and mixed chorus in the high school years.

The work of the music department was facilitated by the presence of the printing shop on the campus, and the fine collection of music in braille was available to teachers and pupils. Frederick G. Meyers, a violinist who graduated from the school and attended the Illinois Conservatory in Jacksonville, returned in 1919 as teacher of violin. He was a close friend of Louis Rodenberg. The latter was also a competent performer on piano and cello, and the two men collaborated in selecting music for printing. Meyers, in the tradition of the music department since the days of Professor Wimmerstadt, was a strong believer in teaching pupil to become proficient readers of braille music. Together Meyers and Rodenberg carried out various experiments—one in 1929 involved the teaching of singing by a sight reading method in which the words of a phrase were followed by the notes in braille. Also, the bar over bar method of printing music, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, was given extensive testing in the music department.

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Two technological developments in the period 1920-1947—radio and the "talking book"—affected the education of the blind at the Illinois school, as they did everywhere else. It is not known when the first radio was introduced into the school, but in 1933, a large



set was placed in the sitting room of the high school boy's cottage. Here it was used largely for entertainment, and the boys had frequent arguments over what programs would be listened to. At the time it was said that "radio is the greatest blessing which has come to the blind since the development of tactile print." It was expected that it would bring the blind more in touch with the outside world, and that it would "make them independent of being read to for daily news and entertainment, including sports." It would also bring them the great music of the world. For pupils in the schools for the blind, all these benefits would accrue, as well as the information and music appreciation that was provided by "The School of the Air" and other specially prepared educational programs. But these expectations were not fully realized at ISB or at other schools because of the difficulty of coordinating class schedules with radio broadcast times. It was felt by some teachers that commercial announcements were too interruptive.

Even though radio was not directly effective in the classroom, yet it did remain a very significant adjunct in music, drama, and current events, and pupils were encouraged to listen to such programs. It must be remembered that in the 1930's and 1940's before the advent of television, there were broadcasts of great dramas, symphony orchestra programs, and frequent authoritative programs on current events.

A more important educational aid in the classroom in schools for the blind was the "talking book"—phonograph records that revolved at slow speed so that much material could be played without changing records. The first long-playing records were invented in 1927, and used a speed of thirty-three and a third. (At present, in 1970, the speed of talking book machines is eight and a third, so four times as much can be placed on a record.) Since, in 1927, the ordinary phonograph played at a speed of seventy-eight revolutions a minute, it was immediately recognized that the new speed would make it possible to record material of interest to blind people, and would open up a new world to adults who could not read braille. The American Foundation for the Blind, after two years of experimentation, produced an inexpensive machine that played at eighteen minutes a side.

To introduce the talking book to schools, the American Foundation for the Blind sent an agent over the country to talk to teachers. He visited in Jacksonville in 1933. Following his presentation, several of the machines were placed in the school. Raymond M. Dickinson, a home teacher associated briefly with the Illinois School of the Blind, declared, however, that the talking book would be only

supplemental to the use of braille. He was only partially right, however, because, although braille remained essential, nevertheless, for some purposes such as teaching literature and drama, listening to the play itself was immensely valuable; even short stories and novels, when read by experts, took on new meaning. Partially sighted children who did not need to learn braille, but could read large print only with difficulty, got much satisfaction from the talking books. By 1940 the Talking Book Education Project of the American Foundation for the Blind had persuaded Congress to appropriate funds for the manufacture of record players and records, and the American Printing House was distributing them to individuals and schools. The circulating libraries for the blind began to send out records, and to stimulate the use of the talking books in schools, the Talking Book Education Project published a catalog of records that were suitable for classroom use. The Illinois School for the Blind participated in a national study to determine what further possibilities there were for the use of talking books, and children were tested on the results of record listening as against reading braille.

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A profound change in the total educational program of the Illinois School for the Blind was made by the introduction of sight saving classes in 1935. Dr. Albyn L. Adams, the ophthalmologist at the school, the superintendents, and the teachers had for a long time been dissatisfied with the situation of the partially sighted children at the school. We have noted that Dr. Adams' examinations and resulting operations and fitting of glasses for some children had made it possible for them to return to the public schools. But there was still a much larger group of children who had partial sight, and whose condition might or might not be improved, but who could not be educated with sighted children. It was to take care of these children that it was decided in 1933 to institute a sight saving program at the school and in 1935, the first class met. As we have seen, the National Committee (later Society) for the Prevention of Blindness, and subsidiary state organizations had been founded as early as 1905 to promote the establishment of classes for the partially sighted in the public schools. It was the philosophy of these organizations that such children not be sent to residential schools for the blind, but be educated with sighted children, although the program would have to be modified. The method advocated was to set up special classrooms, with better than average lighting, eye-easing chalkboards, adjustable chairs and desks, paper with black

lines for writing, and special books in large type (twenty-four point was first advocated, later eighteen point was used).

At the Illinois School for the Blind, as at other state residential schools, children with some degree of sight had always been enrolled, and were taught by the same methods as were the totally blind. They learned to read and write braille, but many read the characters with their eyes, and were often reprimanded because they did not use their fingers. In some schools (not at the Illinois school) blind-folds were used to force pupils with some sight to use braille. These children were often very unhappy and ill-adjusted. As Miss Miriam Russel, one of the two teachers to start the sight saving program, said of one of her first pupils, "There is Billy, whose thick stubby fingers could not differentiate the raised dots; Mary, whose sly brown eyes read the braille, while her nimble fingers apparently did the work; and John, whose day dreams have been interrupted, finally we hope, in favor of a less destructive occupation."

For these and other reasons, Perkins Institution had experimented with sight saving classes, and Illinois had done the same. The first full scale sight saving program in a residential school was begun in Minnesota in 1925. There the school people felt that they had to provide for the partially sighted because the state was so largely rural that public schools could not support special classes as advocated by the Society for the Prevention of Blindness.

At the Illinois School for the Blind, Dr. Adams continued to recommend that the school accept the partially sighted children because there was no place to which they could go in their own communities, or because they were borderline cases that might later become worse, and so had better be taken care of at the school until further examinations could be made. In 1933 Superintendent Woolston took up the matter with Miss Audrey Hayden, the secretary of the Illinois Society for the Prevention of Blindness, which, at that time, was engaged in making a survey of the facilities for sight saving in the public schools. She gave her support to establishing classes at Jacksonville when it became clear to her that the public schools in many communities could not take care of the children who needed special attention. Miss Hayden joined with Dr. Adams and Mr. Woolston in asking help from the Chicago Eye and Ear Infirmary, and the director, Dr. Harry S. Gradle and three colleagues came down and held a clinic. The detailed results will be discussed later, but for the moment we should note that the visiting doctors confirmed Dr. Adams in his recommendation that sight saving classes should be established. This result, plus the survey made by the Society for the Prevention of Blindness which demonstrated



that the public schools could not provide classes for all partially blind children, were the basis for an appeal to the legislature for the money necessary to establish additional classes. By 1936, there were fifty-six such classes in eighteen cities, and more were established in succeeding years. In the long run this meant that the school at Jacksonville would have fewer sight savers to provide for, but at the same time, it was clear there would always be some children who could only be taken care of there. Dr. Gradle and his associates supported this conclusion. In the school report for 1934 it was said,

At the time the clinic was held at the school for the blind there were 250 pupils enrolled. The results of the examinations revealed the following facts: 109 pupils had either no sight or light perception only; seventy-three were classified as only able to count fingers; fifty-five had vision, with correcting glasses, or 20/70 to 20/200, and thirteen had vision of 20/70 or better.

Of the sixty-eight pupils who had acuity of more than 20/200 (that is they could see at twenty feet what a person with normal eyes could see at 200 feet) twelve had progressive eye trouble and being so near the borderline, the ophthalmologists reassigned them to braille classes. Twenty-one pupils, after slight operations and corrections during the summer vacation, were enrolled in the newly organized sight saving classes.

Because the establishment of sight saving classes at residential schools was contrary to the usual policy of the Society for the Prevention of Blindness that such classes should only be in the public schools, the leaders of the Illinois society felt that the sight saving program at ISB should be used very selectively. Consequently it was agreed that only children with visual acuity, after refraction, of 20/200 or less could be assigned to braille classes, and that no applicant for sight saving classwork would be received from a district supporting a sight saving class.

Once it was decided to start sight saving work, Woolston set aside \$3,300 out of his budget to equip at once two classrooms in the main building, and an operating room in the hospital. The Illinois Society for the Prevention of Blindness provided financial help so that Miss Miriam Russel and Mrs. Louise E. Milligan could attend summer classes at the University of Chicago and Miss Elizabeth Brooks could go to Columbia University. The equipment of the rooms—lighting, chalkboards, desks, and so on—was according to the standards set by the Society for the Prevention of Blindness. In one room were fourteen pupils, grades one to four;

and in the other, sixteen pupils, grades five to eight. The children were supplied with textbooks in eighteen point type, just coming into use. Except for class attendance the children in the sight saving program participated in all other activities along with the blind children.

The sight saving program, after the initial excitement, operated smoothly, and problems of vision, health, and personality adjustment among the pupils were on the way to being solved. As more communities in the state opened sight saving departments, children were released from the Jacksonville school, so that the numbers of pupils did not increase. In addition to teaching subject matter and developing the tools of writing and reading, attention was given to the teaching of eye care and personal hygiene, and classwork was done in shorter time blocks, thus allowing opportunity for eye rest. Careful attention was also given to the posture of children and the proper lighting of desks.

In 1939 a third sight saving room was opened for high school students, but it had to be discontinued after a year or so because, since there were no large print textbooks, the teacher had to rely on students reading braille, using talking books, or having material read to them—sometimes by the blind students from their braille textbooks! Some students could use magnifying glasses to read ordinary print, and teachers used eighteen point typewriters, and prepared copies of essential material that were passed around or were mimeographed. Complete typed copies were made of Latin and French textbooks. It was not a very satisfactory situation, but gradually by the 1950's braille high school texts were paralleled in clear type (large type) by the American Printing House for the Blind, and the situation improved. For the elementary grades print material was available, and in grades five to eight braille and sight saving students were integrated earlier. By the 1950's too, all the rooms at the Illinois school were equipped with lights, proper desks, and so on, and gradually, except in the early elementary grades, the braille and sight saving rooms were completely integrated. So firmly was the sight saving program established that in 1946 the alumni began to campaign for a new name that would indicate that all persons who attended the school were not totally blind, a movement climaxed in 1954 with a legislative change of the name to the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School, a matter which will be discussed in the next chapter.

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The general health as well as the eyes of students had to be taken

care of, and of necessity a hospital had to be maintained. We have seen that at the insistence of the doctors, a separate building, isolated from the dormitories, was erected. In 1926 a second story was added and the patient capacity was doubled. It appears that only a few serious illnesses occurred, and only a few epidemics were experienced, because the annual reports seldom mention such matters. In 1934-1936, however, it was noted that 7,491 treatments were given, and average of 30.7 a day, and that 157 patients were hospitalized for an average of 4.5 days each. It is to be presumed that by the 1920's pupils were receiving immunization shots for typhoid fever and small pox, that diptheria antitoxin was available, and that the greatest number of illnesses were caused by respiratory ailments. Diseases like measles, whooping cough, and chicken pox did occur, but prompt hospitalization of victims prevented any serious epidemics. There must also have been numerous cuts and bruises to be attended to, because the blind children were just as active and venturesome as sighted children.

The general health was also aided by the employment of a college trained dietitian to supervise the kitchen, bakery, and dining rooms. At the same time a dentist was in attendance on a part-time basis to make examinations and to give treatments. In 1937 an operating room for the use of the ophthalmologist was completed so that operations and treatments could be given. During the years 1940 and 1941 the load of the hospital and its staff of registered nurses was increased because of severe winters and the giving of immunizations and other care to a number of persons employed on a WPA project in the preservation of food for the kitchen. Also, in 1943 and again in 1945 with the prevalence of infantile paralysis, now generally called polio, special precautions were taken, sanitary facilities were checked, and students were not allowed to gather in large groups, nor all eat at the same time. The slightest sniffle caused the child to be rushed to the hospital to be isolated. Whether or not these measures were really preventive, there were no cases of polio.

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Teacher training and professionalization of the staff made significant advances during the period 1920-1947. In 1926 Woolston said that there were twenty-six teachers, one braille printer, and one social worker on the staff, and that "nearly all had many years of experience." He continued, "each teacher is particularly fitted by training and experience for the special kinds of work she is accomplishing. In high school each teacher is a college graduate, and



has graduate work in psychology and pedagogy. In the elementary school, teachers have had at least two years of college plus experience." Up to 1930 most teachers (exceptions were those that were blind) came from public school teaching, and none had special academic training specifically in the area of the blind. This was the situation in all schools for the blind until 1920, when summer school classes were begun by the Peabody College for Teachers at Nashville, Tennessee. In 1920 the Perkins Institution and the Harvard Graduate School of Education began a cooperative program whereby teachers received in-service training at Perkins, and the Harvard professors came to the Watertown school twice a week to give evening lectures. The course was academic in nature, requiring writing a term paper and taking a three-hour final examination. At the end of the year those who passed the course were given certificates. This course was conducted for many years, and a second, "Special Methods," was added in 1930.

To help upgrade the teaching of the blind, and to fill a gap in college and university courses in education, the American Foundation for the Blind organized a traveling institute of three weeks duration, and a number of schools were visited. As we noted, the course was given on the Jacksonville campus in the summer of 1931, and all but two of the teachers paid fees and were enrolled. The instructors for the institute were Dr. Frieda Kiefer Merry, the director of the American Foundation's experimental school at Perkins; Miss Kathryn Maxfield, the supervisor of the department of research of the AFB; and Dr. Berthold Lowenfeld of the faculty of the Jewish Institute for the Blind in Vienna, Austria. The courses offered were (1) Methods in Education for the Blind and Psychological Problems Involved, (2) Psychology of the Blind, and (3) Modern Education as Developed in the Schools of Austria.

Mrs. Robert Woolston reported on the AFB Institute, and said in conclusion,

The serious cooperation of the teachers[of the School for the Blind] was evident throughout the whole course. In the discussion that followed each lecture, a spirit of lively interest was very marked. The morning sessions from nine to twelve were informal lectures by the instructors. In the afternoon and evenings, much time was devoted to conferences attended by groups of teachers in quest of help. At these very informal sessions the instructors were most generous in giving opportunity for personal application of their experience to the problems peculiar to the blind and we have been brought nearer to their possible solution.

The AFB Institute, as we have noted, was the impulse for curricular and testing improvement and change.

The 1930's and 1940's were a period in which there was great pressure on teachers in all departments to get additional college work. Teachers in handicrafts and music earned their bachelor's degrees by summer work, and the college graduates went on to get their master's degrees. The presence in Jacksonville of Illinois and MacMurray Colleges, both excellent liberal arts institutions, made it convenient for many teachers to earn their degrees without taking leaves of absence. Beginning in 1943, MacMurray College also offered a master's in psychology and education and several teachers took advantage of this; others went to colleges in various parts of the country. There was no formal certification for teachers of the blind during the period to 1947, but new teachers were expected to learn to read and write braille, and to learn about the psychology of the blind and the physiology of the eye, but this was done on an informal basis through contact with other teachers. Superintendent Woolston and Miss Brooks, the school principal, observed new teachers and guided their orientation to the special methods used for teaching the blind. Mr. Woolston urged that all teachers take summer courses that would help them to do a better job of teaching. Among those taking special work was Miss Beatrice Witmer, who spent the year 1942 at Perkins Institution and took the Harvard courses. Teachers also kept abreast of innovations in education by attending state and regional teachers institutes, and by occasional visits to other schools for the blind. A number of teachers went to the biennial meetings of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind. Mr. Woolston himself was a faithful attendant at these sessions. He sometimes gave papers and encouraged his staff to do likewise.

The teachers at the Illinois School for the Blind were under the civil service system of the state, and in general during this period they received compensation comparable to that of teachers in the public schools. In 1940 the starting salary was \$1400, with increases after periods of service and for further schooling. All teachers in all departments were required to hold bachelor's degrees, or to be actively working toward them. The top salary was \$2,800.

In 1945 a survey of the teaching staff showed that out of twenty-seven full time teachers, two had advanced degrees, twelve were college graduates, eleven had two to four years of college, and two one to two years. Of the twenty-seven, eleven had been at the school for twenty-one years or more; eleven more had been there for nine to twenty-one years. This situation might be criticized because it

meant that little new blood was introduced, but at the same time, it might also mean that there was an unusual dedication to the difficult, but rewarding task of teaching the blind. The personal acquaintance of the writer with the teachers over a period of fifteen years, indicates that the latter was more nearly the fact. While technically eligible for civil service status, in 1945, only fourteen had taken examinations and had been formally appointed; the others were working under six months provisional permits, which, in some cases had been renewed for many years. As we shall see, these figures represented the condition of the teaching staff in wartime, when it was difficult to get teachers, and when wages and salaries, as well as prices for consumer's goods, were frozen. The situation was much the same in the public schools, so far as salaries and educational qualifications for teachers were concerned. Many public school teachers were also proceeding toward college degrees by summer and extension courses.

It seems a fair conclusion that the teaching staff of the Illinois School for the Blind was adequately trained, sufficiently experienced, and highly dedicated, and thus able to give as good education as in residential schools in other states and in the public schools of Illinois. Conversations with persons who have been teachers at schools in other states indicate that so far as salary, encouragement of initiative, working conditions, teaching materials, and physical plant were concerned, the Illinois school was among the top half-dozen in the United States, a situation that remains true in 1970.

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The printing shop was a busy place during the years 1920-1947 under the direction of Louis W. Rodenberg, and so well-known had he become among the leaders of the education of the blind that he was recognized as an authority on the printing and use of braille material. As we have seen, being a musician himself, he was especially interested in the publication of music. After the introduction of the bar over bar system at the Illinois school, it was tested there and at other schools, and was widely adopted. Because of his knowledge of braille music, and because he was known for his creative spirit, he was named to the National Braille Committee in 1920. It was shortly after this that Rodenberg prepared the first *Primer of Braille Music*, and in 1924, the American Federation for the Blind sponsored a *Key to Braille Music Notation*, which was prepared by Rodenberg, and was nationally used as a textbook until 1958. During the 1920's, also, braille printers and educators were working to make braille faster to read, and to create a uniform



braille notation for the English speaking world. As we remember, Hall and others had adopted a system which was called American braille, but it was much clumsier to use than the system followed in England. The latter included a number of contractions or abbreviations of common words or parts of words, and after 1905 the English braillists had worked out three grades: grade one, words fully spelled; grade two, a moderate number of contractions; and grade three, a great number of contractions. Recognizing the advantages of the English system over American braille, and over Standard Dot, a system meant to be an improvement over braille, but never used widely, an American committee in 1912, advocated the adoption of British braille, but modifying it somewhat, and coming up with what was called Revised Braille (the British applied this term to the whole graded system of 1905) or grade one and a half.

Americans had long been interested in uniformity with the British, because it would mean that the publications of English presses could be used in the United States. The British, too, were interested in uniformity, but they would not accept the American Revised Braille as an international standard. As Rodenberg explained this action: "Grade two (of British Revised Braille) is more condensed than grade one and a half and has fewer dots. Why should he, the British reader, track his fingers over eleven percent more line-length, many unnecessary dots and unaccented word forms? Why should he increase every hour of writing by seven minutes of extra work?"

Nevertheless, Americans adopted grade one and a half as standard, and American presses began to publish material in this notation. But many Americans, including Rodenberg, felt that the United States should adopt the more efficient British Revised Braille, grade two, and they continued to talk about uniformity. Besides the British did have some books that Americans wanted to read, and they were imported to supplement those published in the United States. To encourage this and aid people who used grade two, in 1922, Rodenberg reprinted the first *Key to Grade Two* and circulated it privately to interested persons. In 1927 he went further and printed the first *Key to Grade Three Braille*.

Meanwhile the American Foundation for the Blind in 1923 took over the work of the Commission on Uniform Type that had been organized by the American Association of Workers for the Blind and also supported by the American Association of Instructors of the Blind. Under the leadership of Robert Irwin, a blind man, who was executive director of the AFB, research was carried on that

confirmed Rodenberg's conviction that the British system was better than that of the Americans. Correspondence with British authorities between 1929 and 1932 smoothed out the differences, and a joint commission of three Americans and three Britishers met in London to complete negotiations and prepare a new key to braille to be used all over the English speaking world. Louis Rodenberg was a member of the committee. As he told the story, he and Miss Alice Pain of England were appointed to write the new key. They worked in London during the hot days of July while the other committee members returned to their homes or went sightseeing. It was Rodenberg who suggested that the new braille notation be called "Standard English Braille." The key prepared by Miss Pain and Mr. Rodenberg was adopted by the joint committee and became the authority on the subject for many years. It is of interest to note the compromises between what the English and the Americans wanted. The Americans accepted practically the whole of the English system, and asked only that contractions not be used for Christ, Jesus, God, unto, faith, glory, grace, holy, saith, and that no abbreviations were to be used for double b, e, d, and f. The English accepted the American signs for capitals and italics. Rodenberg wrote in 1952, "Standard English Braille is now the system of reading and writing used by about 5800 school children in America and about 30,000 adults and these figures are approximately duplicated in the British Empire. Thus a century after its birth, with rival codes defeated and with itself groomed to uniformity of usage, the braille system stands as one of the greatest benefactions to mankind." Today, in 1970, in teaching children, the first words are in fully spelled out braille, but this is succeeded at once by the use of grade two. Grade three braille is not taught, but some people learn it so that they can take notes for themselves, or write to friends who also use it.

As we noted, Louis Rodenberg's contributions to braille music were equally important as those of literary braille. In 1929 he was the only American delegate to an international conference held in Paris. Here he became the coauthor of *The Notation Musicale Internationale Braille* published in France. He and Miss Rose Ranson, a Jacksonville teacher, translated this manual into English. In 1931, after his Paris visit, Rodenberg was invited to attend an international conference on braille in New York City.

At the same time that Rodenberg was active in national and international matters concerning the use of braille, he was also participating in the affairs of the blind in his home state. First was the editing and publication of *The Illinois Braille Messenger*, a quarterly magazine containing accounts of activities of the several organi-

zations for the blind, news of the school at Jacksonville, and a list of new books available in braille through the library at the school for the blind. Second, in 1934, Rodenberg became chairman of the Illinois Braille Committee, consisting of himself as a braille specialist, and three teachers from the Division of Visitation of Adult Blind of the Department of Public Welfare—Mrs. Margaret Howse, Miss Anna Johnson, and Ray Dickinson. After more than a year's work, *The Standard Braille Series* was produced. It consisted of three volumes which took adults step by step from grade one through grade one and a half to grade two of Standard English Braille. Book One featured the use of large embossed line letters over the braille, and the "tracker lines" to help teach the movement of the fingers. After a two-year trial in Illinois the work was offered for general sale, and many copies went to all parts of the United States. It was said to have had a larger sale than any other work in braille. The third state project taken on by Rodenberg in the printing shop was the publication in braille of *The Living Museum*, a small monthly magazine of the Illinois State Museum which contained interesting and informative articles on natural history, art, history, and anthropology.

During the 1930's and 1940's the publication of music continued. After his visit to Paris, Rodenberg translated and edited a French work—*An Index of Gregorian Chant*, and thus made available to English speaking musicians the vast collection deposited with the Association Valentin Haüy in Paris. Other important publications were collections of Catholic and Lutheran hymns commissioned by the Library of Congress.

In 1938 a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project was placed under Rodenberg's direction, and ten persons were taught to transcribe from print to braille. It was planned to copy children's books for the circulating library and to prepare supplemental reading material for the teaching of the adult blind as well as teaching materials for the school classes. In two years the printing shop turned out 44,950 pages of braille. In addition to all these activities, the music plates in American braille were transliterated into Standard English Braille. There was a steady flow of maps, test questions, alphabets, contraction charts, souvenir sheets, invitations, and programs for the use of the school. Another venture was the collaboration with Miss Helen Wear, a teacher at the school, in the preparation of a new text for teaching braille—*The Class Way to Standard English Braille*.

A great honor came to Louis Rodenberg in 1943 when he was given the Migel Medal for outstanding service to the blind by the



American Foundation for the Blind. The award was established in 1937 by M. C. Migel, a silk manufacturer and philanthropist of New York. Since Mr. Migel was deeply interested in the project of standardizing braille, and contributed funds for some of the committees who had been engaged in the project, it was especially appropriate that the medal should go to Rodenberg. The Illinois brailist went to New York as the guest of the Foundation, and the presentation ceremony was held in the Helen Keller Room at the American Foundation for the Blind headquarters. Miss Keller made the presentation, saying,

This is not the first time my spirit has turned to you, Mr. Rodenberg. For years I have read with proud appreciation of your beautiful work equipping blind people to enter the musical world, and my pleasure is indeed great to present to you the award for distinguished service. We congratulate you on the enthusiasm which makes an art of your teaching and a glory of the ideal you kindle in the darkness an unquenchable beacon. It is also a wonderful work you have accomplished in unifying the braille music notation of the blind of Europe and America and in widening the facilities by which they may gain independence in inspirational activity. . . .

The Migel Medal presented to Mr. Rodenberg is now in the Historical Room of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School.

Closely associated with the printing department was the circulating library which served people throughout Illinois and Iowa. As more and more material was available from the Illinois School for the Blind printing shop and from other presses, and as the adult blind were taught to read, the circulation of books mounted. In 1922 6,500 books were mailed out under the free postage provision of acts of Congress. By 1930 the circulation had increased to 8,000, and in 1935 to 16,201 on a book stock of 8,096. Talking books were added in 1934 and soon were a considerable part of the circulation; in 1940, 18,415 books in braille and 531 talking books were sent to 910 active readers. The circulating library was also used by the pupils of the school, although the accommodations in the library building were not very good. Through the 1920-1947 period, the librarian was Miss Frauncie Moon who graduated from ISB in 1913, and immediately went to work in the circulating library. She was appointed Braille Librarian in 1919 and continued in that position until she retired in 1960. She was devoted to her job, and not only kept track of the circulation, but was an efficient reader's advisor, being herself

widely read and well informed on current events. Miss Moon was also known as an expert and rapid reader of all kinds of braille, including grade three.

Both Miss Moon and Mr. Rodenberg, being themselves such expert readers of braille, deplored the use of the talking book, feeling that proficiency in braille opened up a much wider area of knowledge than did the former. Rodenberg felt that the blind should become what he called "maximum braillists." To achieve this rank, he said, required personal effort, and individuals "should strive . . . always to increase their fluency of reading and writing. They should equip themselves with information concerning libraries, equipment, and all kindred matters. They will find that braille has a great deal more of value and vastly greater possibilities than they ever dreamed." Rodenberg described the way in which he used braille:

In my work as editor and publisher, with a wide professional correspondence and bewildering accumulation of data I must have well-ordered and classified files of addresses, letters, information, etc. All of these I have in braille. You ask how I find time to do so much braille writing? It is quite simple. All notations are made on a certain size slip or card. As my reader proceeds with my mail or other material I follow her, usually without much interruption, making my own notations and taking down address, etc. on a braille writer. The brailled notes, after they have been attended to in regular routine may be filed away as occasion demands. Since I use grade three . . . , I find copying material for study and record quite practical and economical in all ways. I label and file all letters myself.

Louis Rodenberg was an occasional poet as well as a writer. Best known of his poems was "Triptych to a Sunken City, Kaskaskia," prepared as a memorial to the first capital of Illinois and the signing of the first constitution of Illinois in 1818. Kaskaskia, never more than a very small town, was destroyed by a flood in 1881 when the Mississippi River changed its channel. Rodenberg's poem was commissioned by the Illinois organization of the Daughters of the America Revolution, and was inscribed on a brass plaque on a height of land overlooking the Mississippi River. Rodenberg's interest in Kaskaskia, and through it his interest in the history of the state, arose because his boyhood home was nearby, and the farm was later owned by him.

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The Alumni Association continued to be a strong and active organization during the period 1920-1947. The trust fund grew larger and its resources helped a number of blind persons to get into business, or to go on with their education. A new enterprise was the establishment of a home for blind women, using as a financial nucleus the bequest of a few thousand dollars from Mary Bryant, an alumna of the school who died in 1926, and for whom the home was named. Additional money was raised by pledges from individual alumni and friends, and in 1946, the home opened at 1001 S. 4th Street, Springfield, with Mr. and Mrs. Frank Howse (alumni) in charge. The support of the home has continued to interest the Alumni Association, although it was eventually incorporated and had its own board of trustees.

The Alumni Association also supported a successful effort to get the state legislature to appropriate money for college scholarships for blind youths. Among the most active alumnae in this effort was Theodora Franksen (later Mrs. Wilbur Phillips), who graduated from the University of Chicago, and was elected a member of Phi Beta Kappa. She returned to the school in 1911, first as braille librarian, and, after 1914, as a teacher in the elementary department. An untiring worker in the cause of the education of the blind, she was also a supporter of the trust fund. Another major interest of the alumni was in the circulating library, which, until 1934, when Congress provided for federal support, was maintained by the state, and its funds were included in the budget for the school for the blind. Consequently, the alumni biennially pressed upon the legislature the need to be generous in funding the library. Still another activity was to provide cash rewards to students who performed "meritorious services" to the school, a program which eventually resulted in Alumni awards to outstanding members of each graduating class. The Alumni were also concerned that the history of the school and the memory of those who had contributed to the welfare of the students should be preserved. One of the first efforts in this direction was made in 1924 at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the school, when a marble plaque was placed in the main building in memory of Samuel Bacon. The plaque is now in the Historical Room of the new administration and high school building occupied in 1970. In 1937 and 1938 there was a movement to commemorate the contributions of Frank H. Hall by erecting a memorial plaque, but it had to be dropped because of the imminence of the second world war, and suitable recognition of Hall was postponed to 1968 when the diamond jubilee of the invention of the braille writer and the stereotyper was celebrated.



Still another enterprise was the drive to recognize that the school also educated partially sighted children by changing the name of the school to Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School.

The biennial meetings of the Alumni Association continued to be high points in the lives of the members, because they could renew old acquaintances and relive youthful experiences. Each meeting was featured by a gala banquet and other social events. To encourage good feeling, Louis Rodenberg and Frederick Meyers organized song fests at which school songs and popular songs were sung by the whole group. Finally, alumni came to meetings because they could feel that they were participating in a worthwhile effort to help blind persons to have better lives.

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In this chapter we have surveyed a most important period in the history of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School. It was one in which the curriculum was rebuilt upon the ideals of progressive education, with emphasis upon educating the "whole child," and with the recognition of individual differences, so that each pupil could achieve self-realization. Perhaps the ideals were not completely attained, but it is significant that they were set as goals to be aimed for. This new attention to the individual child was reflected not only in the traditional academic program, but in the sight saving classes, the expansion of vocational service, and the physical education innovations and athletic programs.

The physical appearance of the campus also changed, again to aid in the education of the whole child, because, while a complete cottage plan was not achieved, the new residences, divided as they were into relatively small units, and with a considerable degree of privacy because of the small bedrooms, offered much more opportunity for individual attention.

We must remember that all of these things were accomplished against the background of great social change in the post-World War I period, the economic blows of the great depression, and the world-wide upheaval of the second world war. From about 1940 to the end of Robert Woolston's career in 1947, the continued innovation that had characterized the earlier years was difficult to carry on. Teachers were lost to the armed services and were hard to replace. Transportation facilities were curbed; parents could not come by automobile to take their children home for vacations, and the railroads were jammed with passengers. Restrictions on the use of building materials hindered the orderly progress of repair and renovation of the building. But at the same time, this very

period was one in which further changes should have been made in the curriculum, the social services, and vocational training. The period of the late thirties and forties was one in which great attention was being paid to the care of the weaker members of society. The need of families for relief from the economic blows of the depression had aroused the public conscience to give more attention to mentally ill adults, and mentally retarded and physically handicapped children. The second world war itself aroused people to the need to build a better world once the war was won and the threat of the dictators was averted. Almost from the time the fighting began, government and private groups talked about and planned for the good society that would emerge from the world struggle.

In Illinois the state legislature provided funds for various agencies to survey post war needs. The Board of Commissioners for Public Welfare, an unpaid advisory body, conducted a survey of the building needs of the state institutions, authorized detailed studies of the operation of particular institutions and required that recommendations be offered for future change. As we have noted the report about the school for the blind was critical of the school and proposed a number of changes in the academic, vocational, and extra-curricular programs. The recommendations of the committee will be taken up in the next chapter when we examine the ways in which they were implemented.

During the war years Mr. Woolston had several illnesses and was saddened by the death of his wife in 1943. Entering his seventieth year in 1944, the burdens of his job must have been heavy, and he no longer had her to confide in. Certainly the report of 1945, so very sharp in its tone, must have weighed on his mind. Yet he continued to perform all of his customary duties until after school started in the fall of 1947, when he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died on October 15.

It was said of Mr. Woolston that he was a "dignified gentleman," but except when angry, he was "jovial in manner." He was also a "keen wit," appreciated "literary values," and had "strong religious feelings." Although he made no public expression of the latter, one of his closest friends was the Reverend Harris W. Pankhurst, the pastor of Pilgrim Congregational Church of which Mr. and Mrs. Woolston were members. Students regarded him as a strict disciplinarian who tempered justice with mercy, and as a friendly participant in school affairs. One story illustrates his rapport with the boys. For several years it was the custom to "steal" the "grace bell," the little tap bell used to call the pupils to order in the dining

room so that grace might be said. After several days and an announcement that the bell must be returned at once, the boys took it to Mr. Woolston and asked for a "ransom," which was to go into a student fund. Mr. Woolston always redeemed the bell after giving a lecture on the sanctity of property and the evils of getting into mischief.

While Mr. Woolston never expressed an educational philosophy as such, yet he did see clearly the goals to be worked for in the education of the blind—to give them a sound academic background thus making them acquainted with the best of the cultural heritage of western civilization, and to open as many avenues as possible for blind persons either to continue their education in college or to find a means of whole or partial economic security.

In the last years of his administration, under the urging of the administration of the Department of Public Welfare in Springfield, Mr. Woolston agreed to delegate some of the responsibilities of his office. He approved the appointment as assistant superintendent of Leo J. Flood, an experienced teacher who had been on the staff for many years, and a full-time principal, Jack R. Hartong, a teacher who had earned his master's in school administration. The latter assumed his duties in September. The announcement of the appointment of Mr. Flood was to follow later, but with the death of Mr. Woolston, he took office at once as acting superintendent.

Thus new leadership for the Illinois School for the Blind took over to direct the institution into the patterns that were recommended by the 1945 survey of the Commissioners of Public Welfare.



## Chapter Seven

# New Responsibilities, 1947-1970

The period 1947 to 1970 was one in which profound changes took place in all aspects of the operation of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School. Briefly, these were (1) closer supervision and co-operation with Illinois state agencies responsible for implementing legislative action, (2) the rebuilding of the physical facilities of the school to remove the last remnants of the nineteenth century atmosphere, (3) increased emphasis on total child and family welfare, (4) recognition of the responsibility to provide special education for children with handicaps, (5) gradual changes in the day-to-day life of the school to provide a flexible three track education, (a) for "normal" children (those with more or less uncomplicated visual handicaps), (b) for educable mentally or emotionally handicapped, and (c) for the severely multiply handicapped, including the deaf-blind. We will note that "flexible" is the key word, because always the individual capacities of the students were uppermost in all programs and all departments.

The leadership of the school during these years was exercised by three superintendents: Leo J. Flood, 1947-1962, Everett E. Wilcox, 1962-1964, and Jack R. Hartong, 1964 to the present. Mr. Flood, whose entire professional life was spent at the school, was a graduate of Routt High School and Routt College, and in 1936, earned a delayed bachelor of arts degree at Illinois College. He began his career at the Illinois School for the Blind in 1911, eventually becoming a teacher of Latin and other subjects in the high school. He was a slightly built man with sparse hair, very friendly and pleasant in manner. Sometimes spoken of as a "gentleman of the old school," he enjoyed musical and intellectual pursuits, and was a regular attendant at concerts and lectures. He had considerable facility in writing, and it is a pleasure for one to read the manuscripts of his graceful but succinct speeches, reports, and articles which are preserved in the IBSSS Historical Room. He was active in local affairs being a member of the Kiwanis Club, the Jacksonville Country Club (he was a good amateur golfer, and was once city champion; even in his later days he shot in the low eighties), and because he had served briefly in the first world war, he belonged to the American Legion. Among other community duties was a term as president of the board of directors of the Jacksonville Public Library. As a recognition of his services to the blind, the Illinois

Federation for the Blind awarded him the Mary McCann Medal in 1957, and Illinois College honored him with a degree of Doctor of Humane Letters at his retirement from the superintendency in 1962. He was a faithful communicant of Our Saviour's Catholic Church, and he was often looked to for advice and support by his rectors and priests. After he retired, he was happy to be teaching Latin to the youngsters of the parish high school. This writer knew Mr. Flood as a quiet, friendly man who always listened carefully to friends and associates. Mr. Flood never married, but lived in bachelor quarters on the second floor of the main building, where he was a genial host.

Mr. Flood guided the school through a period of transition and innovation in the years following the second world war, an era in which there were great changes in social and educational matters. His administration was notable because it called for closer cooperation with the Department of Public Welfare than had been demanded earlier.

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During the late 1940's, the people of Illinois, as well as those of other states, were concerned with the reorganization of the state's social and welfare services, which had grown rapidly in the previous decade under New Deal programs. While the Illinois School for the Blind and other state institutions remained under the Department of Public Welfare, the latter was reorganized in 1943 and again in 1947, when this chapter begins. In 1947 the School for the Blind was included in the Educational and Correctional Service along with other residential schools, and the superintendent of the Jacksonville school was responsible to General Horace E. Thornton, one of the deputy directors of the department. While the general policy making and administration were thus in a straight line from the Director of the Department of Public Welfare through General Thornton, the department was so organized that oversight of a number of areas was exercised by other divisions. For example, the Administrative Service included the Divisions of Fiscal Service, Personnel Service, Home Economics and Nutrition, and Chief Engineer. Beside these staff department agencies, the social workers of the seven regions into which the state was divided did visitation in the homes of blind children, and had a part in admitting children to the school. Further, state (and private) agencies outside the Department of Public Welfare were also concerned with the school; an example was in the planning and financing of the first Institute for Parents of Pre-School Blind Children, which will be discussed

in detail later in this chapter. The Institute was held in August, 1946, and was sponsored by the Department of Public Welfare through the School for the Blind, and by the Illinois Commission for Handicapped Children, the Division of Services for Crippled Children, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Division of Child Welfare, the University of Chicago Clinics, the Elizabeth McCormick Fund, the Division for the Blind, the Illinois Home and Aid Society, the Chicago Community Trust, and the Field Foundation.

As time went on, the multiplication of Department of Welfare agencies, as well as those of other departments was reflected in the continuing enlargement of the administrative staff at the school for the blind, and in 1958, a two-hundred page (mimeographed) manual of procedures was prepared. An organizational chart in the manual showed that the superintendent had supervision over the following services, each with a responsible head: Social, Braille Print Shop, Fiscal, Dietary, Household and Maintenance. Nearly every service also reported to its counterpart in the Springfield office of the Department of Public Welfare. By 1960 the Department of Public Welfare was the largest state agency under the authority of the governor. The department was provided for in an Administrative Code that had been passed by the legislature and hence it was called a "Code Department." It employed 13,500 persons, operated twenty-six institutions, and was organized into five major services: Mental Health, Educational and Residential, Administrative, Physical Plant, and Reimbursement, each headed by a deputy director. Included in the Educational and Residential Service was the Illinois School for the Blind, which had its name changed in 1954 to Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School to make it clear that the school was not only for children that were completely blind and were taught braille, but also for those with enough vision to be taught by sight saving methods. By 1960 it became clear that the state's responsibility for the care of children, and to provide them with education, health, and other needs, was recognized as a sphere which was growing in scope, and therefore it would be well to set up a special unit of the state government to take it over. The first step in this direction was taken in 1961 when the Department of Public Welfare was abolished and the Department of Mental Health was created to take over the mental health functions and certain other non-psychiatric responsibilities for children and specialized services. (Other functions of the DPW were transferred to a Department of Public Aid.) It was recognized that the two divisions of the Department of Mental Health really performed unre-



lated functions and should be separated. Therefore the General Assembly, looking forward to the creation of a code department of Children and Family Services in 1963, provided for a legislative commission to study all state services for children and their families. At the same time, a Children and Family Services Advisory Council was inaugurated by the Department of Mental Health. Thus the chief result of the change from Department of Public Welfare to Department of Mental Health was the grouping of the non-psychiatric duties in the Educational and Residential Service, and the hospitals into the Mental Health Service. Within a short time the former was broadened into a division of Children's and Specialized Services with the Educational and Residential Services as one part of it. The director of the latter Service was Donald Brieland, who had earned his Ph. D. in Psychology at the University of Minnesota and then was on the faculty. He later came to Northwestern University as Professor of Psychology. While in this position, he also headed the Elizabeth McCormick Memorial Fund, a child welfare research foundation in Chicago from 1954-1961. He was largely responsible for formulating the idea that children's and family services were closely related and of such singular importance that they should be committed to a special state agency.

In the Educational and Residential Service, which was under the direction of a deputy director, Cyril H. Winking, were the state schools for the visually handicapped, the deaf, the crippled, and the orphans of veterans, the Illinois Visually Handicapped Institute (the old Industrial Home for the Blind), and the Child Welfare Service. The Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School was not immediately affected by these events, but its administration was brought even more closely under the supervision of the Springfield office, and the necessity for cooperation between and among the school and the various services of the department was emphasized.

The second step in creating a Code Department of Children and Family Services came in 1963 when Governor Otto Kerner signed legislative acts establishing it, and the new department started its existence in January, 1964. Illinois was the only state that had such a separate department to look after the welfare of children and their families. Its establishment was the result of the work of several groups, legislative, private, and professional, and owes much to the vision and leadership of Dr. Brieland. The function of the new department was stated in the legislative act:

The term 'child welfare services' means public social services which supplement or substitute for parental care and supervision

for the purposes of (1) preventing or remedying or assisting in the solution of problems which may result in the neglect, abuse, or exploitation of children, (2) protecting and caring for homeless, dependent or neglected children, (3) protecting and promoting the welfare of children, including the strengthening of their own families and counseling of family members, (4) providing adequate care of children away from their homes, where needed, in foster family homes, or day care or other child care facilities, (5) providing counseling for mentally retarded, physically and socially handicapped children and their parents when not otherwise available.

The educational institutions under the supervision of the new department were:

to provide an education for children whose home communities lack specialized programs or who cannot progress satisfactorily in local special education programs. Where ever possible, family life and educational opportunities should be strengthened so that the child may receive most, if not all of his grade and high school education in his own community. . . . If no adequate public school program could be developed for handicapped school children, it would be possible to serve children with handicaps of greater severity at the residential school. . . .

Thus the policy of serving children at the Braille and Sight Saving School and at other residential schools only when educational services could not be provided at home was consistent with the general philosophy of child welfare in Illinois that children were better off if they were reared in a family situation wherever possible.

That this was a concept that was not universally accepted by educators of the blind was demonstrated at the time that a successor to Mr. Flood, who retired in 1962, was being sought. Several of the men interviewed said that they did not agree with the philosophy that children should be taken care in their own communities. As a representative of the department said, "[These educators] preferred instead a 'strong' residential school where children would stay at least twelve years. They gave special emphasis to music groups, wrestling teams, and other extra-curricular activities. This department feels strongly that although such goals are important, they are no substitute for family life."

The organization of the Department of Children and Family Services expanded rapidly in the next years, until by 1970 three major divisions were developed: (1) Educational and Rehabilitation

Services, (2) Child Welfare Services, (3) Management Services. The state was divided into seven regions, each staffed by social workers and child guidance counselors. Much of the contact with the families of children at the Braille and Sight Saving School was through the regional offices, and the social service department was in close touch with them.

The Braille and Sight Saving School was one of four schools in the Division of Educational and Rehabilitation Services. In this division were also the Visually Handicapped Institute, Community Services for the Visually Handicapped, and the Coordinator for the Visually Handicapped. Thus the school was able to coordinate its programs closely with others that concerned the blind and partially sighted. The Department of Children and Family Services, was, in 1970, fully aware of its responsibility to maintain the schools under its jurisdiction as first class educational institutions, while at the same time recognizing that education for handicapped children could not be separated from social functions provided by the state. Further, the department strengthened the ties between the schools and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and in addition to making the formal report required by law, the schools, including the Braille and Sight Saving School, sought the cooperation and assistance of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's office in making evaluations, and in certification of teachers and curriculum. In recent years the ties between the school and the Superintendent of Public Instruction became closer, because the latter was the agent through which federal funds for education were disbursed. Several projects at the school such as the establishment of a tactile aids center, the mobility and orientation program, and some aspects of the special services department were financed by such means.

The administrative system of the Braille and Sight Saving School in 1970 made the superintendent not only the head of the whole institution, but the superintendent of the school proper. He was assisted in both capacities by an assistant superintendent who had direct oversight of the high school and elementary schools, the library, the psychologist, the speech therapist, and special services. Directly responsible to the superintendent was the medical staff, the business manager, the supervisor of social services, and the chief engineer. To this writer, long familiar with institutional functioning, IBSSS seemed to operate efficiently, with lines of authority clearly defined, and with good cooperation between and among administrative and staff members.

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When Mr. Flood assumed the superintendency in 1947, it appeared that the enrollment of the school was on the edge of declining, because he noted that the enrollment in the kindergarten and lower grades was decreasing. He said that if this trend continued it would mean that in a few years the number of children in the school would be much lower. This situation was due to the almost total disappearance of *ophthalmia neonatorum* and to the greater number of children in public school programs for the visually handicapped. The enrollment fell from a high of 230 in 1947-1948 to 188 in 1955-1956, but even as this low point was reached, the numbers of kindergarten and primary children began to rise. The chief cause for this was the sudden increase of cases of blindness due to *retrolental fibroplasia*, a condition first named and described in 1942. It occurred a few weeks after birth when the "vitreous chamber of the eye became filled with fibrous tissue, the retina becoming detached, and the eye shrinking into the socket, and usually resulted in complete blindness." It was recognized that it was found only in premature babies of less than three and a half pounds. Its cause was not known, but it was suspected that it was due to the amount of oxygen administered to the new born child. This suspicion was soon confirmed. By experimentation, the amount of oxygen was reduced, and eventually *retrolental fibroplasia* became much less frequent. But, so long as the incidence was great, a matter of ten years or so, it made for an increase in enrollment at all schools for the blind, and all of them, like the Illinois school, had to make quick and unexpected adjustments in their programs. Most of these children were "normal" otherwise, and their numbers brought an emphasis on improving the regular programs of the schools. It was thought that since so many of these cases occurred in families that were reasonably well off and often of influence in their communities that they brought pressure to maintain and improve standards of education. It was ironical that in saving the lives of premature babies by the administration of oxygen and by other means that had been discovered by medical science, a condition was created that caused many of the babies who might otherwise have died to be blind. This was a situation that developed in other areas also; medical and surgical skill saved the lives of many who would have died, but at the same time the number of children with physical and mental handicaps increased, and, as we shall see, as a result, there was a greater demand for special educational methods and facilities for training them.

Thus, at the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School, because of *retrolental fibroplasia*, and later, the increase in the number of

mentally, emotionally, and physically handicapped children who were also visually handicapped, special education expanded, and by 1970, as the number of "normal" blind children decreased because of programs in the public schools, the number enrolled at Jacksonville increased so that the total enrollment stayed steady at around 200.

A second factor that affected enrollment was the policy of returning to the local communities those children who for one reason or another could be sent to the public schools. This was a policy that went as far back as the time of Frank Hall who asked the Chicago Board of Education to set up a special program for blind children, in which they would be taught braille and would be helped by a trained teacher, but would also attend some classes with sighted children. It was Hall's often expressed belief that the more contacts the blind had with the seeing, the better it would be for them. So in September, 1900, the first day school classes for the blind in any city were started under the direction of John B. Curtis, a student at the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind who had subsequently attended a Chicago high school to prepare for admission to the University of Chicago, where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees. As a student and later a teacher under Frank Hall, he worked closely with the latter on the development of the braille writer and the stereotyper. Under Curtis the Chicago program became a model for those started in other cities. In 1945 Mr. Curtis was awarded the Migel Medal for his life's work for the blind.

By and large the relationship between the public schools of Chicago and the school at Jacksonville was good. Each recognized the important place of the other in the education of the blind in Illinois, and each respected the other's sphere.

Another city school system with which the school had close connection was that at Jacksonville. Because of the presence of the school in the city, blind children in the area have always attended on a day-school basis. The school system also cooperated in putting on a joint program whereby selected students at IBSSS were sent to Jacksonville High School to attend classes in academic studies. The program started in September, 1952, with six seniors and four juniors. They attended classes, using their braille slates for note taking, and writing their examinations and class papers on typewriters. For three years IBSSS young people went to classes in English, history and some other subjects. Then the program was discontinued by the action of the Jacksonville school board which said that due to an increase in enrollment and consequent larger

classes and crowded classrooms they could no longer receive the blind students. This perhaps was not the basic reason, because it was also pointed out that public high school teachers felt that it took too much time from teaching their sighted pupils, and that the blind students themselves did not want to participate fully in the general activities of the high school and never felt at home there. The students did not attend school assemblies, nor take part in extra-curricular affairs, but were more closely attached to the Braille and Sight Saving School. For all of these reasons Mr. Flood and the Springfield office reluctantly agreed to remove the students.

Yet, from the standpoint of the young people there were some positive results; they said that they had learned to be more independent, to adjust to crowds, and had broadened their acquaintance with sighted persons. Mr. Flood discussed the problem with four other superintendents of schools for the blind, and three of them (Maryland, Kentucky, Oklahoma) said that they had good results from sending their students to public high schools, but the New York City school did not have such a program for the very reasons that were given by the Jacksonville school board when it abandoned theirs. The values of residential schools versus those of public day schools was, and still is, a hotly debated subject. It was held that students in the public schools did not have the advantage of the expert help that was given to them in the residential schools, and that the blind children were segregated from the activities of the schools. Neither did they enjoy the benefit of the extensive music, vocational, and physical education classes of the residential schools, and in general the education received in the latter was superior to that of the public schools. But there was another very large body of opinion that upheld the superior advantages of attending public school. The view of the Illinois institution was somewhere in the middle. It was committed to the idea that it was better for the blind child, if at all possible, to go to the school in his community, but that the residential school was indispensable if he could not. Although cooperation with the Jacksonville schools was dropped, a few children, as had always been the case, were returned to the public schools, and the Braille and Sight Saving School helped them by supplying textbooks and other materials. But in 1962 when Everett Wilcox became superintendent, he supported the policy of the Children's Services of the Department of Mental Health that the school accept and retain only those who could not stay in their own homes, or find educational opportunities in their own communities. As Jack R. Hartong, then the chief of the Institutional Unit of the Children's Service, said, "Resources should be developed to serve



blind children in regular classrooms in their home communities with the help of a trained teacher often serving several blind children on an itinerant basis." Under the leadership of Superintendents Hartong and Wilcox, by the end of the year 1963-1964, eighteen junior and senior high school students were in attendance at schools in sixteen communities. The program was carried out in cooperation with the special education division of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's office, and these students received whatever textbooks, braille writers, talking books, and other teaching aids were needed. An experienced teacher at IBSSS, Henry Meyer, was appointed to work closely with the public school teachers to see that they knew what was expected of them, and the students received expert counseling. In 1967, the major responsibilities carried by Mr. Meyer were assumed by the special education supervisors in the school districts. By the end of 1969-70, forty-one students had been transferred to the public schools. Like all other programs at the Braille and Sight Saving School, this program was very flexible and tailored to fit the needs of each child. Few students have had to be returned to Jacksonville, because the selection was carefully made, and the school was informed if special problems arose.

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Under Mr. Flood's direction, the business of educating the blind did not at once change from what it had been under Mr. Woolston, but the basic curriculum did follow the general trends in education. As Mr. Flood said in 1950, "The entire staff was becoming more and more conscious of its responsibility for the study and understanding of the child as an individual. Our program takes into consideration that the responsibility of our school is not confined to the nine months the children are in our care, but that the work of the school must be coordinated with programs for the preschool children and for children of school age during the summer months and plans for boys and girls after they leave school."

In pursuit of this policy, the school, under the direction of the Department of Public Welfare, and in cooperation with the Illinois Commission for Handicapped Children, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the University of Illinois Division of Services for Crippled Children, held an Institute for Mothers of Pre-School Blind Children. Such institutes had been held in a few schools after the Michigan school pioneered in 1936, but Illinois was one of the first to follow Michigan's lead. We remember that teachers and superintendents had long felt that blind children should be better prepared in their homes to enter school, and the

purpose of the institute was "to teach mothers how to encourage normal development in their children even though they cannot see." During a five-day period in August, 1946, eighteen mothers and their young blind children came to the campus. The little ones were placed in charge of nursery school teachers, while the mothers attended classes in child development. Among other things, the mothers "learned what sort of toys and games the blind child needs, and how he can learn to feed and care for himself." In succeeding years the institute was extended to include both parents, and the program was expanded. In 1950, for example, there were forty-two mothers, twenty-three fathers, and thirty-five children. The last institute was held in 1968, the program being discontinued because the child welfare services in Illinois could provide social workers to help parents of all handicapped children.

At the other end of the child's school experience, after graduation or other termination of attendance, assistance in getting gainful employment, or attending college continued to be very important. For long this had been a responsibility borne by the alumni and by the teachers and administrators of the school, but now it became the duty of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Employees of this agency made frequent visits to the campus to give aptitude tests and to interview students and parents about career possibilities. In 1954 a representative of the United States Office of Vocational Rehabilitation attended a group conference with parents and children, and complimented both the Illinois Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and IBSSS for their excellent cooperation in a good program. A full-scale career conference was inaugurated in 1955 under the direction of Floyd Cargill, a teacher of social studies in the high school. Speakers were persons engaged in various occupations, among them home teaching for the blind, piano tuning, typing with use of the dictaphone, switchboard operating, radio repair and servicing, managing vending stand operation, servicing vending machines, and teaching. Such conferences have been held at intervals ever since.

In 1960, with the cooperation of the American Federation for the Blind, a study was made of the graduates and former students to determine the effectiveness of the vocational counseling service, and to aid in the evaluation of the curriculum with respect to the needs of the students after leaving school. The program was held to be generally good, but it was suggested that vocational counseling should be continuous and that an early determination of when a student should leave school be made. The Illinois Division of Vocational Rehabilitation shortly after began to work with students more

directly by making frequent visits to the school. A vocational counselor came to the campus once a week to keep in touch with the career plans of students, and to alert them to opportunities available to them. The vocational counselor also was the liaison between state and private agencies that offered specific training for particular careers, and so students hopefully could be started in suitable careers. The American Foundation for the Blind report recommended little change in the curriculum, and the general education program was continued along with broad training in the use of the hands and the understanding of mechanical principles in the industrial arts classes.

The industrial arts program went through a major revision in 1949, under the leadership of Dale W. Holmes, a young man who had been educated at Western Illinois University, and who was familiar with the program of industrial arts in the public schools. There, most woodworking operations were being done by machinery—lathes, drill presses, circular saws, and so on, Holmes felt that teaching the blind to use hand tools should be augmented by instruction in the use of power tools. There was considerable hesitation about taking this step, because it was thought that the possibility of serious accident was great. But Holmes, with the backing of Mr. Flood, assured everyone that with proper safety guards (some of which he devised himself), such as shields over the saw blades, and push sticks and jigs for saws, drill presses, and lathes, there would be no danger. The use of power tools had already been introduced at the Wisconsin school and at Perkins, but the success at the Illinois school brought their general use in other schools. Mr. Holmes died in 1960 and was succeeded by Theodore Wessel, a graduate of Eastern Illinois University, who continued to operate the woodworking shop along the lines started by Holmes. We should also note that the latter was the first teacher of industrial arts who had had professional training. Until he came, Miss Elizabeth Newman was the teacher of woodworking and other crafts, as well as the teacher of domestic science. Clarence Richardson was the teacher of brush making, basketry, upholstery, and chair caning. He was a graduate of the school who had returned in 1932 to teach basketry and other crafts. He learned auto mechanics at Bradley University summer school, and in the 1950's as crafts were phased out (never discontinued, but taught only as hand training), Mr. Richardson was directed into the teaching of cane travel or mobility and orientation. He was a graduate of MacMurray College, and also earned a master's degree in psychology there.

In 1954 Roger Anderson, a graduate of Western Illinois Uni-



versity in industrial arts, was employed to take over a part of the craft work which Richardson had taught, but primarily to institute a metal working shop, and teach auto mechanics, and other machine operations. He needed a heavy lathe as a basic machine tool, but it was clear that it could not be placed on the third floor where the shops were located and where Mr. Holmes' woodworking machines were. Besides, teachers protested that the whine of the electric bench saw was disruptive. So the whole industrial arts department was moved to the east end of the basement.

Further, the work in the industrial arts department was graded so that students would undertake progressively more difficult work as they gained experience. They were also introduced to all areas of wood shop, metal shop, piano tuning, and general handicraft on a rotating basis. The industrial arts instruction, like that in other departments, had to deal with children with other handicaps along with their visual ones—mental, emotional, and physical. In general the work in all the industrial arts was highly individualized, classes being as small as three or four. Although mental testing was of help in classifying pupils, much of the teaching was done by trial and close observation of results. A prevailing view of the industrial arts class was that students who did not do well in academic work would succeed with their hands. But this was a generality that had many exceptions; some boys of high I.Q. were also good workmen, and others with lower scores were all thumbs. Physical disabilities, especially lack of muscular coordination, was often a reason for success or failure in working with tools. The emotional state also affected the skills of boys, and some of these problems grew out of or were aggravated because of frustration arising from inability to make hands do as the brain directed them. So it was that instructors had to give much individual attention to their pupils, and seek advice from the psychologist and the child care expert. More will be said about these matters later in this chapter.

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The most significant aspect of the total educational effort was the development of the individual child so that he could achieve the utmost happiness and satisfaction in his personal life and his contacts with the group. Academically speaking, this meant that there had to be great flexibility in placing pupils in grades, in assigning them to braille or sight saving classes, and in placing them in special help or regular programs. The basic division into kindergarten, primary, elementary, junior high school, and high school was maintained. The majority of students had normal I.Q.'s, and

fitted into a pattern much like that of the public schools. They graduated at the age of eighteen or nineteen, with a few as late as twenty or twenty-one. In this program there was the same curriculum and the same sequence of work as in the public schools. The kindergarten and primary courses continued to be based on acquainting children with their social and economic environment, and the elementary grades were devoted to learning the skills of reading and writing, and gaining an acquaintance with geography, science, and arithmetic.

The vitality of the academic curriculum was affirmed by a team of educators who surveyed the school in 1969. At that time there were 218 students enrolled and distributed in classes as follows:

	No. of Classes	Enrollment
Kindergarten and senior primary	1	8
Print readers - grades 1-6	4	23
Braille readers - grades 1-6	4	29
Special help - ungraded	5	32
Special services - ungraded	4	18
7th grade (braille and print)	2	20
8th grade	2	22
Freshman	Departmental	21
Sophomore	"	15
Junior	"	15
Senior	"	14

The teaching staff was supervised by the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, who also served as principal of the junior high and high school, and two supervisory teachers, one for the primary and elementary grades, and the other for Special Services. There were thirty-seven teachers assigned as follows:

Academic classroom	23
Music	3
Industrial Arts	3
Home Economics	2
Physical Education	3
Business Education	1
Orientation and mobility	2

The teaching staff was supported by the following specialists and consultants:

Librarian	1
Recreational Worker	1
Speech Therapist	1
Psychologist	1
Social Workers	3
Vocational Counselor	1 (part time)
Pediatrician	1
Dentist	1
Registered Nurses	3
Cottage Life Supervisor	1
Cottage Parents and Child Care Trainees	39

In 1968 the Superintendent of Public Instruction designated the school as "Certified," which was a formal statement that the curriculum of the Braille and Sight Saving School corresponded to that for all other pupils in Illinois schools. The distribution of students into classes was flexible because of the changing number of children of varying ages or developmental levels. An example of this is indicated in the above table; there were only 3 percent at the six-year-old level, but 33 percent at the sixteen-seventeen level. Mental, emotional, and other handicaps required that class programming be continually reviewed.

The 1969 survey team, which consisted of Mr. William English, president of the Association for the Education of the Visually Handicapped; Dr. Gideon Jones, Florida State University; Miss Evelyn Rex, Illinois State University; and Mr. Robert Winn, Texas School for the Blind, found that over all, the curriculum was "to be commended because it was a child-centered program, and not tied to subject matter areas." The team went on to say, "Realistic modifications are made in the light of group needs, individual requirement, and other factors which have a bearing on the curriculum: (a) selective use of the most meaningful portions of textbooks, (b) development of units of study, particularly in the areas of science and social studies, and (c) resourcefulness in selecting techniques and materials which emphasize realistic experiences through tangible aids, field trips, etc."

The team also felt that the attitude of the students toward the educational program was excellent. This conclusion is supported by the present writer, who during the months in which this history was written was in and out of classrooms. He found that while there was a business-like air during the class periods, there was much freedom for students to ask questions, volunteer information, and discuss matters with teachers and among themselves in a lively



manner. The interest of students in everything about the school was manifested to the writer, because the older boys and girls often dropped into the Historical Room where the composition of the history went on to inquire about the progress and to ask questions about the many artifacts on display.

The curriculum of the high school in 1969 required four years of English, one year of mathematics, two years of science, one year of American history, and one year of government, as well as four years of physical education and four years of industrial arts or home economics. Elective subjects in addition to music were Algebra II, French, Latin, Occupations, Speech, Sociology, Typing, World Geography, Commercial Law, General Business, and Consumer Education. This appears to be a long list, but many of the subjects were given on an alternating yearly schedule.

Teachers at the school, like all good teachers everywhere, were innovative and frequently developed their own teaching materials and methods. This creative spirit was aided by the continual enlargement of the school library and a growing tactile aids center. The materials thus made available permitted student participation and inquiry. Continued experiment and investigation of teaching materials and teaching aids went on at all levels, depending on the teacher's inclinations and the particular needs of the pupils. The survey team remarked about this innovative spirit saying that these persons should be encouraged to publish or disseminate the materials which might assist other educators for the visually handicapped. Continual training of teachers went on through attendance at professional meetings and by enrollment in summer school and extension courses. Attendance at the latter was fostered by means of a fund made available to the school out of federal grants to give financial aid to enrollees. Faculty improvement funds have also been spent for visiting other schools to observe their programs, and to bring speakers to the campus for workshops. For example, in 1970, one weekend in October when students were dismissed, two workshops were held, (1) Utilization of Low Vision and (2) Teaching of Braille Reading and the Use of Audio Materials in Teaching the Visually Handicapped. The first workshop was associated with a national project on the utilization of low vision, which was concerned with the development of whatever vision a child had, no matter how small. As a teachers' guide to the subject said, "The visual functioning ability of the child is primarily developmental—the more a child looks, especially at close range, the more he stimulates the pathways to the brain, the greater the amount of information he collects until he accumulates eventually a variety of visual

images and memories. One of the primary problems of the low vision child is that there is very little which he can "pick up" just incidentally through his visual sense."

Thus the purpose of developing low vision, particularly for the legally blind with an acuity of 20/200 or less, was to give them visual experiences in form, color, distance perception, and so on to the greatest degree possible. The methods used were the presentation to the child of blocks of different shapes and colors, very large print such as is used in newspaper headlines, and other objects that he comes across. By practice and repetition, these things become meaningful to the sense of sight, even though they may not be sharply defined. This was a new field of education of the blind, and it was still in process of experimentation and growth. One of the pioneering investigators of low vision, sought as a consultant by other schools, was a Braille and Sight Saving School teacher, Mrs. Dale (Ruth) Holmes. Mrs. Holmes began work on the subject in 1960 when she did her master's thesis, "Training Residual Vision in Adolescents Educated Previously as Non-Visual." In this, as in other areas, IBSSS was in the forefront of education for the blind. At present no institution has a special teacher of low vision, but at the Illinois school, Mrs. Holmes has worked with individual students in addition to her classroom work. Mrs. Holmes said that perhaps there will never be special teachers, but rather all classroom teachers will become aware of the need for building on whatever vision a child has, and that such workshops as the one here described can work toward that end.

The other sessions of the 1970 workshop were on the utilization of audio materials, a field in which much has been done in recent years, and the findings and production of specialists were brought to the attention of classroom teachers. The third session, on the teaching of braille reading was concerned with ways to speed up reading, a matter of much concern to all brailleists.

The administration of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School has been concerned at various times with establishing standards for qualification as teachers. This was a national problem for some years. In the 1950's the American Association of Instructors of the Blind prepared a set of standards, and sought to get teachers to meet them, after which the AAIB issued certificates of competence. For several years in the 1950's and 1960's, Mr. Flood was chairman of this committee, and he saw to it that his teachers were certified. In recent years, however, the school was more concerned that teachers meet the qualifications set by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and all teachers had to possess Illinois Teach-

er's Certificates "appropriate for the grade level and/or subject matter areas in which they teach." To be certified as elementary teachers of the visually handicapped at IBSSS, they had to have a bachelor's degree with at least fifteen hours in five areas, two of which must be in techniques of braille reading and writing, and in practice teaching of the visually handicapped. The other three fields were to be chosen from child growth and development, survey of the education of exceptional children, hygiene and physiology of the eye, methods, curriculum adaptations and/or program adjustments for teaching visually handicapped children, or orientation and mobility. These areas corresponded to specific courses offered in colleges and universities that had majors in special education, with attention to the teaching of the visually handicapped. Since such courses were not widely offered (although some Illinois universities did so), for this requirement might be submitted a year of supervised teaching in a residential school for the visually handicapped, but the basic fifteen hours requirement must be met for permanent certification.

For certification for teaching subject matter in the junior high school or high school, or for music teachers, twelve hours of credit, including the teaching of reading and writing braille (braille music for music teachers), and practice teaching were required. For the other hours credit, work might be taken in the same fields as were open to elementary teachers. For teachers of orientation and mobility, speech correction, and multiply handicapped children, similar qualifications were required. The above schedule was effective in September, 1968, and provisions were made for teachers already on the job to qualify or to continue to be employed. In general, the requirements for teachers at IBSSS equalled or were higher than those required by the American Association of Instructors of the Blind (in 1968 this organization changed its name to the American Association for the Education of the Visually Handicapped) so that if a teacher wished, he could readily be accepted by the latter.

Salaries of teachers at the Braille and Sight Saving School were reported by the 1969 survey team as being comparable to those received by teachers of special education in the Chicago schools, which were generally greater than in other school systems. The salaries were determined according to the schedule of the state personnel department, and they were graded according to education and years of experience. In 1967 the classification, Teachers of Exceptional Children, was created for teachers in state schools who had master's degrees in education, psychology, or other appropriate fields, and in 1969, 69 percent of the teachers at IBSSS



were in this category. A fair salary basis was probably one of the reasons that teachers tended to stay until retirement. But there were sometimes matters of working conditions and salary that seemed to teachers to require an agency for communicating with the administration of the school and the officials in Springfield. Consequently a number of the teachers joined the American Federation of Teachers, and through negotiation, problems such as recompense for extracurricular duties and for summer school teaching were adjusted.

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Physical education, too, found its place in the total program of the school to be much like that in public schools, although work in the gymnasium and swimming pool had of necessity to be highly individualized. The annual gymnasium demonstration program was discontinued during the war years, and in its place was a decathlon, a series of gymnastic and physical development events—jumping, running, basketball throw, etc.—in which each boy competed against the all-school records by age groups, and at the same time he could measure his own progress against his last year's record.

In 1964 the old medieval castle was razed and replaced by a modern gymnasium with an adequate, well-lighted room suitable for basketball and all indoor activities, dressing rooms, and showers, and a room for wrestling practice. A special feature was a Hercules Universal Gymnasium, a machine by which pupils could develop all parts of their bodies by pulling, pushing, and lifting against weights. Since pupils could adjust the latter for themselves, they could measure their own progress. Basketball throwing with the use of a bell on the backboard helped them locate the basket, ropes and ladders for climbing and other devices made it possible for the instructor to prescribe a specialized program for each child.

The new gymnasium was integrated with the swimming pool building, and the latter was renovated to provide showers and equipment rooms. The pool was rebuilt, and east of the gymnasium a cinder track was constructed. To guide the runners and give them confidence, wires to mark the lanes had hand holds that slid freely. Intramural competition was a feature of the physical education program, and teams in basketball, swimming, baseball, and so on were developed on a grade or cottage basis and provided a means of exercise in an informal setting. Both boys and girls took part in these games, and on one occasion, in 1970, it was a home run by a fifth grade girl that decided the baseball series! One of the most exciting intramural events was the annual olympics, a track meet

in which two teams competed. A permanent record was kept of record holders on each event. In two locations on the campus there was playground equipment for casual play, and each cottage for younger children had a stock of roller skates and bicycles as well as wagons and other pull toys so that children enjoyed much outdoor exercise.

Interschool athletic competition also flourished. In 1948, under the leadership of the student council, the name "Warriors" was adopted for all teams, and the colors maroon and gold were chosen for uniforms and cheerleaders' costumes. The Illinois school, which had long been a member of the original National Athletic Association of Schools for the Blind, later became a member of the Middle Western Athletic Association of Schools for the Blind, and finally, in 1958, of the present North Central Association of Schools for the Blind, made up of thirteen institutions roughly in the upper Mississippi valley. The major areas of competition were track and wrestling, and the meets were held in rotation at the larger schools where all the teams could be housed. In addition to the conference championship tournaments, dual or triangular meets among the members were also frequently held. In wrestling, the Warriors also competed against other Illinois high school teams, and the school was a member of the Illinois High School Association. The teams traveled by bus, thus giving an opportunity for cheerleaders and some students to go on trips. For girls there were play days with the schools of the North Central Association, and for both boys and girls side excursions could be made to places of historical or scenic interest. Certainly the interscholastic program was of value, not only for the physical development of the athletes, but also because it taught team play, and cooperation among individuals for a common cause.

Track and swimming meets were competitive events of long standing, and during the 1940's basketball also was an interschool sport. However, the latter was one in which only the partially sighted engaged, and therefore it was dropped. Wrestling as a sport for blind boys was started at the Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia by Neal F. Quimby in 1929. It was introduced at the Illinois school in 1954 by Seymour Haliczzer, a graduate of the University of Illinois who also had training at the North American Gymnastic Union, a unit of Indiana University. Wrestling was an ideal sport for blind boys because it did not depend on the use of sight, and because it demanded rigorous personal development. The Illinois school was notably successful in both wrestling and track, and several times in recent years it held

championships in the North Central Association of Schools for the Blind.

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Through the period 1947 to 1970, the music department turned more and more in the direction of filling the same place that music departments did in the public schools, and the staff was reduced to three persons. Frederick G. Meyers retired in 1957 and was succeeded by Willard Sittler, a graduate in public school music from Western Illinois University. A teacher of piano was Mrs. Mary K. Warren, a graduate of the school who, after earning her A. B. at Carthage College, studied at Julliard School of Music and at Peabody Conservatory. Both Mrs. Warren and Mr. Sittler had master's degrees. The teacher of voice for many years was Mrs. Armeada Woods Zell, a well-qualified vocalist, who taught private voice lessons and conducted the school choruses. Mrs. Zell died in 1968, and Mrs. Warren and Miss Marie Shaker, who had a master's degree in music education from the Michigan State University who had been appointed in 1961, now shared the responsibility of choral work, as well as piano instruction. So long as Mr. Flood was superintendent, he insisted that so-called "classical music" should continue to be played by the orchestra and taught to piano and voice students, but after his retirement, pressures arose from outside the music department to abandon the orchestra and replace it with a band. A part of the pressure came from the pupils who wanted to enjoy the things that students in public high schools did. The contacts between students in other schools became greater through participation in regional and state meetings with representatives of student councils and from students who transferred from public schools. Also, the IBSSS students began to attend state music contests, and so compare notes with pupils from the public schools. As students at the Jacksonville school took trips to other schools for the blind to participate in athletic contests, play days, and music festivals, they became acquainted with what was going on. For example, the Missouri School for the Blind had a marching band, and pupils of the Illinois school wanted to know why they did not have one. So it was that in 1964, instead of organizing the instrumental students into an orchestra, they became members of a band of about twenty. Gradually instruction in strings, which was already declining, was ended.

Another change in the music department of significance was the dropping of individual voice lessons, although chorus work with girls' and boys' glee clubs and mixed choruses of younger children



continued to be popular. All instrumental instruction was voluntary, and the choice of instrument was decided by students, their parents, and the instructors. Piano and band instrument teaching began in the third or fourth grade, but band membership was mostly confined to junior high and high school ages.

The piano and organ department remained a strong part of the musical life. For many years outstanding teachers such as Alice Mathis Geisler (1918-1957) and George Gerlach (1904-1949) had taught young people to play these instruments. Mrs. Geisler was also an expert brailist and transcribed many pieces of music for the printing shop. Among her achievements was the first complete *Catholic Hymnal and Choir Book* published in braille. Mr. Gerlach gave loving care to the pipe organ in the chapel which had been installed in 1922, replacing an older one of 1885, and supervised its repair and maintenance. The 1922 organ remained in service until 1964, when it was removed and a fine electric instrument was acquired.

In 1968 an important innovation in piano teaching came when an electronic Wurlitzer Music Laboratory was installed so that class instruction could be carried on. The system included six piano keyboards connected to a console. A single teacher could teach six children at the same time, and she could, through earphones, listen individually to each student and also communicate directly with them if necessary. The pupils heard only themselves through their own earphones. The device had been used successfully in schools for the seeing, and it permitted more children to be taught by a single teacher, an important point in cost control at all schools.

As always there were frequent opportunities for musical groups to perform. An occasional assembly was given over to individuals, particularly pianists, for recitals. Holidays and graduations were events for performance by all musical groups. Sometimes the children of the kindergarten and primary grades gave programs featuring their rhythm bands, and athletic contests were outlets for music because the band played pep music.

The spring festival was the climax of the year's work. In 1928 it took on a new character when an Illinois State Senate committee, consisting of Lowell B. Mason, Charles Thompson, and Earle Searcy, visited the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind. As Senator Mason told the story, he badgered one of his friends who was with the committee—a lobbyist for the Standard Oil Company—into purchasing boxes of candy for the best performers. From this beginning followed a long series of visits by Senator Mason to the school to present prizes to the music students. He had a personal

interest in music because he was an amateur pianist. His mother, also interested in music and a "proper Bostonian," had named him for the famous nineteenth century American hymn writer and founder of public school music, Lowell B. Mason. The Senator was also a patron of music in Chicago where he practiced law and in Washington where he became a member of the United States Federal Trade Commission. In 1970 he still lived in Washington.

Senator Mason continued to visit the school, and he wanted to do something to encourage the children to develop their potentialities to the utmost. As a friend of governors and other public men, he invited them to come to the school and attend the annual concert. About 1955, the spring event became known as the Lowell B. Mason Music Festival, and the chief guest was Mrs. William G. Stratton, the wife of the governor, who awarded the prizes. The Senator acted as master of ceremonies, giving a talk to the children about music, and making a big thing about the proper way for youngsters to greet "the first lady of Illinois."

Governor Otto Kerner, himself knowledgeable about music, presented the prizes several times during the 1960's. In 1962 a committee on arrangements, made up of friends of Senator Mason, was appointed and provided the prizes, but the Senator himself was still the motivating force. As a newspaper reporter said, "Senator Mason has endeared himself to the hearts of hundreds of students who have passed through the school. . . . They love him and that's a fact you feel right to the heart just sitting in the audience."

For several years in the 1960's a feature of the festival was a demonstration of perfect pitch. Senator Lowell found it quite remarkable that a half-dozen children possessed this unusual ability, and he gave prizes, usually a box of candy, to the lucky ones. In other years the music groups were taken to Springfield for a luncheon, or gave a concert over the radio, and once they appeared on a segment of "Monitor," a national program. Awards were usually made, not only on the basis of talent but on the extent of improvement made by the pupils over the preceding year, because Senator Mason felt that they would inspire children to do their best. The awards themselves were gold statuettes or other kinds of trophies for the boy and girl who won first place, and boxes of candy for those who received honorable mention. In 1960 a group of friends presented a bust of the Senator, and it is now in the Historical Room. The donors preferred to give a work of sculpture rather than an oil portrait because the children could "see" it with their fingers.

In 1950 some of the better student performers began to take

part in the Illinois high school music competition, and a few years later, instrumental and vocal ensembles were sent to the meets. By 1970 the music department occupied the same place in the school curriculum that it did in the public schools, and like them, it not only prepared a few really gifted pupils for careers in music, but it offered musical appreciation and enjoyment to all.

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Another important change that made for better means of meeting the needs of the individual child was increased attention to the total life of the children. So long as they were cared for by the school, it was necessary that provision be made for the improvement of the education and training that came after the classroom day ended. This was a matter of concern to the Department of Public Welfare and social workers generally, and the Illinois Welfare Association held sessions on the duties and responsibilities of house parents. The Department of Public Welfare began a program of in-service training in 1952, and finally, in 1956, it held a short summer institute for employees at all the schools under the department's supervision. But the schools for the deaf and the blind in Jacksonville felt that their problems required a separate program, so they held their own institutes at the Braille and Sight Saving School for several years. Eventually, however, with larger numbers of workers, and divergent interests, each held separate training sessions, usually in August. In the 1960's the job of house or cottage parent was steadily upgraded, and required higher levels of education and professional training. The salary level and the hours of work were also adjusted, the latter to a forty-hour week. This change made necessary a shift system so that teams of cottage parents would be on duty day and night. About 1952 cottage parents were placed under a cottage life supervisor who was responsible for the coordination of the work, and in 1955, the program was placed under the direction of a trained social worker, a child guidance counselor whose functions will be explained below.

Perhaps the most significant event in the evolution from the twenty-four hour a day housemother—the widowed gentlewoman type—who gave long hours of selfless service to the children, to the experienced and professional cottage parents of 1970 was the month-long workshop for child care personnel in August, 1968. The workshop for thirty participants was financed by a grant from the United States government, and was directed by Henry Aldridge, supervisor of children's services at IBSSS. He instituted the use of



sleep shades to be worn to classes and at other selected times—at meals, for example—so that the students would gain a greater comprehension of what it meant to be blind. The men and women found out by actual experience the necessity for describing objects carefully in words, not by pointing or using the hands, and learned how important it was for blind children that the furniture and other objects in their rooms not be moved. Learning by doing, the blindfolded cottage parents made beds, measured liquids and dry materials, operated electrical appliances, cared for their clothing, and discovered the techniques of grooming. They also learned to sight read braille, even doing some experimentation with finger reading while wearing their blindfolds. Finally, along the way, the cottage parents learned the elements of the psychology of the blind, and the physiology and hygiene of the eye.

In addition to workshop and in-service training, there was an effort to provide the means whereby house parents could work toward a collegiate degree as Associate of Arts in Child Care through the cooperation of Southern Illinois University, which offered classes on the school campus. This program did not develop, but further efforts in this direction were under way in 1970. It was considered desirable that cottage parents have this advanced training because they were intimately associated with the teaching of the children, and especially so because of the increasing number of multiply handicapped children being admitted. Another direction in which child care services should go was plotted by a survey of the Braille and Sight Saving School in March, 1968, by a team composed of Sister Mary Emmanuel, R. G. S., Coordinator, Institute for House Parents at St. Louis University; Miss Virginia Cornwell, Chief, Social Worker, Illinois Children's Hospital-School; and Erwin H. Plumer, Child Care Consultant, Division of Children's Schools of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Their overall assessment was that the school had a "very good program," and was "to be commended for emphasizing as it does, what is necessary and desirable for the development of the maximum potential of each child. Few program additions need to be made, since the essential components are already present. What is required for the most part is a refinement and coordination of that which already exists." The survey recommended (1) that the in-service training program be intensified, and (2) that additional cottage parent supervisors be appointed so that more time and more personnel would be available for direct contacts with cottage parents and their hour-to-hour problems. We have noted that the school administration was making progress on the first recom-

mentation, and it was to be hoped that the second would be taken care of by legislative approval of budgetary requests.

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A significant addition to the staff of the school in 1955 was a child guidance counselor to plan and implement a social service program, the need for which had been pointed out in the 1945 report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Welfare. As the Department of Public Welfare officials said, when they prepared a job description, "The purpose of such a program is to individualize, implement, and evaluate each child's total living situation and to integrate the understanding of each child by all who have a major interest in his well-being." Among other things, the child guidance counselor was to put together a social case record system, keep close contact with pupils who had problems relating to "adjustment within the school or their families," confer frequently with other staff members "regarding individual children's adjustment," and with parents when indicated. The man appointed as social worker and child guidance counselor was Henry Aldridge, a graduate of Millikin University with a master's degree in social work from Washington University in St. Louis. Mr. Aldridge had several years experience in regional offices of the Division of Child Welfare of the Department of Public Welfare. The matter of attaching a child guidance worker to the staff was brought to Mr. Flood's attention by the Department of Public Welfare because problems had arisen with respect to cooperation with the Division of Child Welfare, and Mr. Flood saw immediately the advantages to him and to the school of the addition of a social worker.

Mr. Aldridge soon found that he had all the work he could do; the task of setting up a record system alone was formidable because the pertinent files had to be transferred from the superintendent's office, and intake and evaluation forms had to be devised. At the same time many adjustment problem children were referred to him as teachers and officers found that his techniques of child guidance were successful. Mr. Aldridge was at the school for five years, and then was transferred back to the Springfield office of the Division of Child Welfare. Mrs. Marie Fricke took his place. Even after he went to Springfield, Mr. Aldridge continued to advise Mr. Flood on many matters, especially on the evaluation of children to be admitted.

In 1964 when Mr. Hartong became superintendent, and with the increasing involvement of the school in special education for multiply handicapped children, a reorganization of the school administra-

tion was effected. The social service division was created to include social work, recreation, and cottage life, and Mr. Aldridge returned to the school to head the office. In the next few years, the staff of social workers was enlarged to three, in addition to Mr. Aldridge, whose duties now became partly administrative. In the opinion of Mr. Aldridge this was a minimum staff. He said in 1965,

If one takes into consideration the fact that a large part of the population [of the school] is —multiply handicapped, many being emotionally disturbed and having failed elsewhere in adjustment to public school, community, or family living; one supervisor of social service, three workers and one trainee seems to be too small a staff. Every child at the school should be assigned to a social worker, who, if necessary, can see him regularly. With a population of 225 and estimated capacity of a social worker to carry twenty-five to thirty active cases, six to seven social workers, plus one full-time supervisor and one part-time assistant would be required. Otherwise much of academic program is wasted because it does not reach the children for whom it is intended and in many cases, the very child for whom IBSSS is a last resort, must be dismissed because it cannot adjust.

But by 1970, the enrollment was down to around 200, and the staff consisted of a supervisor and three full time social workers, two with master's degrees. As in some other areas, the ideal number of workers was not attained.

Members of the social service department worked on a committee with some of the teachers to introduce a course in social hygiene, feeling it was necessary to fulfill the obligation to educate the whole child. The project was put into action in February, 1967, with the assistance of a federal grant. The committee surveyed the available books, films, and other instructional materials, and it was determined that courses should be given on three levels—fifth, eighth, and twelfth grades. Many public schools had such courses, and the Illinois School for the Deaf had done extensive work in the field. Further, IBSSS realized that, being a residential school, it acted, in many respects *in loco parentis*, and that it should assume more responsibility for the development of its pupils than was required of the day school. An announcement about the new course, along with a suggested reading list, was sent to parents, and they were invited to ask questions if they wished. At the elementary level, in a course taught by the teaching staff, the child was introduced to concepts about family relationships, and the differ-



ences between the sexes. He was also taught the correct vocabulary of terms about his own body and its functions, all with the objective of instilling a healthy attitude toward sex. At the junior high level, the objectives were the same, but broader in scope. The first part of the course, dealing with social relationships, human development, physiology, and hygiene was given in the regular classes in science, and the last part, concerned with boy-girl relationships and marriage and the family, was given by the social workers. Much use was made of movie films to arouse discussion, and all questions were answered, fully, scientifically, and frankly. The high school senior course, taught by the social service staff, used a textbook on human growth, along with films and anatomical models, and it was emphasized that biological sex maturity was only a part of man's maturity. Through classroom discussion, such matters as the relationship of children to parents and the responsibilities of courtship and marriage were explored.

The courses met the approval of parents, the students were very receptive, and a high degree of maturity was developed. The Illinois school was the first institution for the visually handicapped to introduce such a course, and other schools requested information about it. Although it was experimental so far as materials were concerned, it appeared that it was a permanent and necessary addition to the curriculum.

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What later became the third division of the Department of Social Service, recreation, was begun in the fall of 1952 after the Institutional Therapy Consultant of the Department of Public Welfare assisted in its planning, and a full-time worker was employed. The recreation program was intended to fill the after school hours and weekends, and it was expected that it would center in the cottages with the cooperation of the cottage parents. The recreation worker had the assistance of volunteers from MacMurray College, Illinois College, and Jacksonville High School. There was also a small group of part-time workers from Illinois College who lived in the cottages and performed various campus duties. Under the leadership of these people a program of games, hikes, craft work, etc. was given, the aim being to involve every child in some activity. Mr. Flood, in 1961, said that the recreation "is planned to appeal to children and to help them use their leisure time constructively and creatively. It provides a means for individual self-expression and development as well as social adjustment."

During the 1960's the recreation department was directed by

Mrs. Marguerite Hug, and she was assisted by a part-time recreational worker and four college students. Mrs. Hug, in general, followed plans worked out by the Department of Public Welfare for recreational programs in all the institutions under its direction. In 1963 Mrs. Hug wrote:

Recreation at the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School, as elsewhere, is concerned not only with helping others to enjoy life more fully, but also with encouraging them to grow and mature socially, mentally, and physically through a carefully planned, well-rounded program. With these goals in mind, the Recreation Department has provided during the past school year a varied schedule of activities for all ages of students from kindergarten through high school.

A flexible, overall blueprint of weekly activities was worked out. A feature was a number of "socials" for the different levels. At each social different activities were provided: "let's pretend" sessions, talent shows, crafts, walks, and nature outings. For older groups there was more emphasis on competitive games such as ping pong, pool, shuffleboard, swimming, and the "favorite activity, dancing." The socials for the grade ages were held in the afternoon and those for the junior high and high school young people on Tuesday and Friday evenings, 6:15-8:50. After a period of activity such as dancing, or bowling on the lanes of the State Hospital, the hour was used for snack bar and table visiting in the IBSSS recreation room under the auditorium.

Another aspect of the program was work with various crafts, and in 1963-1964, there was emphasis on work with clay as being especially suitable and helpful to blind children. Leather work, picture-making using collage techniques, construction of Christmas decorations, and puppetry were also enjoyed. Again the emphasis was on work in the round or in relief as being particularly good for blind children whereas painting or drawing would have sufficed for seeing children. In general, instruction in crafts was carried on in the recreation room, but the children were encouraged to take the materials back to their cottages and in many cases were helped and encouraged by the cottage parents.

And, as always, there were seasonal parties "from a gala Halloween evening complete with spook tunnel, fortune teller, and apple bobbing, to beautifully decorated Christmas parties visited by Santa Claus, to Valentine hearts, and a St. Patrick's Day party of bubble blowing and balloon popping."

An important part of the social program were the "charm

classes" for the fifth through eighth grade girls, held once a week, at which personal appearance, etiquette, and character development were taught. For the boys of the fifth and sixth grades, a "Body and Fender Shop" taught good grooming. Teachers and cottage parents had long been concerned with the personal appearance of students, and the classes in grooming greatly strengthened these attempts. Personal attractiveness was one aspect of the overall aim of the school to fit the visually handicapped for acceptance by the seeing world. The recreation department was also responsible in part for giving the children off-campus experiences. "Cultural events at MacMurray and Illinois Colleges, educational trips to New Salem, supermarkets, the police and fire stations, and fun excursions to the Norris House Christmas party [at MacMurray College], to the state wrestling tournament, to special uptown movies, and to hilarious donkey basketball games filled many enjoyable hours for the students."

After 1965 the recreation department became a part of social services, and greater emphasis was placed upon the cottages as centers of out-of-class activities. The principal duty of the recreation director was to coordinate the program, supply materials and ideas, and direct the cottage parents and volunteers who worked with the children. To further the effort, craft rooms and areas for hobbies were set aside in each residence.

The significance of the volunteer workers in the recreation program is very clear from the above account. The volunteer program, as we have noted, was developed by the Department of Public Welfare in the 1950's for the mental hospitals, schools, and other institutions so that the public could become more involved in the charitable work of the state. The volunteers also performed functions that could not be provided for out of tax revenues, and, further, the volunteers would make the students more aware of the life outside institutional walls. To win the interest of the public and to plan work for the volunteers, a director of volunteer services was appointed at each institution. At the Braille and Sight Saving School, this was the recreation director, since the principal use of volunteers was in this area. The volunteer program in Jacksonville was peculiarly effective because of the presence of MacMurray and Illinois colleges. These young people were notably generous and outgoing, with strong social consciousnesses, and numbers of these dedicated persons served the children at IBSSS.

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In the years since 1947, as we have seen, the most significant



aspect not only of the academic program, but of the total educational effort at IBSSS was the development of the individual child so that he could achieve the utmost happiness and satisfaction in his personal life and in his contacts within the group. Academically speaking, this meant that flexibility was necessary to place pupils in grades, in assignment to braille and sight saving classes, and in special help or regular programs. The majority of students had normal IQ's, and, except for possible adjustments because of eye accident or illness before coming to the school, they fitted into a pattern much like that of the public schools and graduated at the age of eighteen or nineteen years.

At the same time that the normal blind and partially sighted children were being taken care of, more attention was given to the teaching of children who had other disabilities along with their visual ones—the mentally retarded, the emotionally disturbed, the physically crippled, and the deaf-blind. In part the program for children with multiple handicaps was inspired by a general movement in Illinois and throughout the nation to provide an education for all children at public expense, and it was recognized that the handicapped needed “special education.” The idea was formalized in 1951 when a division concerned with the education of exceptional children was created in the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and was largely concerned with a program of special education in the public schools. In 1958 the Department of Public Welfare created the post of Supervisor of Special Education, whose duties were to “review, evaluate, and coordinate the residential educational programs for exceptional children in the facilities of the Department.” He was to “make recommendations for the improvement or revision of such programs and will plan and develop new programs.”

The man selected for the job was Jack R. Hartong, a graduate of Illinois College in 1939, who after experience in the public high schools as a teacher of social studies and basketball coach, came to the Illinois School for the Blind in 1942 to teach physical education. In 1944 he left for service in World War II. After discharge, he went to the University of Illinois and earned his master's in education and school administration. He returned to the Jacksonville school as a teacher of social studies in 1946. Superintendent Woolston named him as principal when Miss Brooks retired, and, when Mr. Flood became superintendent, Mr. Hartong remained as principal and assistant superintendent.

While the state thus officially recognized its obligation to educate the handicapped, various institutions, public and private, for

many years had been aware of the problems of educating these children. In the nineteenth century the emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded child was often regarded as uneducable, and was simply dismissed from the school. Pretty much the official policy was to "plane and saw and hammer the child to fit the school," but by the 1920's the need for specialized knowledge about children with psychological handicaps was recognized, and a testing program was begun. On the basis of the test results, special help classes were established in the primary and elementary grades so that problem children could be taken care of, and, it was hoped, be prepared for regular classes. Such classes were established at the Illinois School for the Blind after the Board of Commissioners of Public Welfare made its report in 1945. Even before the appointment of Mr. Hartong by the Department of Public Welfare, the school at Jacksonville had moved to give greater attention to individual differences, and to plan special programs. As Superintendent Flood said in 1950, "Many of our teachers are taking summer courses in special education to fit them better to teach the handicapped. Several of our new positions have been set up for the purpose of child study; these positions will be filled as soon as staff can be found. The entire staff is becoming more and more conscious of its responsibility for study and understanding of the child as an individual."

Among the specialized positions was that of psychologist, and Julian (Jack) E. Curtis was employed in 1952. His first task was to test all new pupils and retest old ones, with particular attention to emotionally handicapped children. His services were especially valuable to the Admissions and Dismissal Committee, made up of teachers, house parents, and administrative officers. Further, the services of the Institute of Juvenile Research, an agency of the Department of Public Welfare, were called upon for assistance. The Institute sent teams of pediatricians, psychologists, and social workers. As Mr. Flood said, the psychiatric consultation was of great value and "often staff meetings, contributed to greater appreciation of each person's role in working with a child, and in increased cooperation of staff."

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In the special help classes of the primary and elementary school, children were taught as much reading and writing and other academic subjects as they could take. In some cases, children were introduced into regular programs as they advanced, but others continued to need special help. As they reached the top of their ability

more attention was given to teaching daily living skills—to count money, take directions, shop in a store, participate in extracurricular activities, become physically independent for feeding, clothing, take personal care of themselves, and develop work habits so that they might find a place for themselves in some institution such as a sheltered workshop. And, if they could not hold a job of any kind, they would be able to perform daily tasks in a family situation. Emphasis increasingly was placed on learning by other than traditional reading, writing, and arithmetic. By giving mentally handicapped children the opportunity to learn by listening to records, by being read to, and by using oral exams to tell what they learned, children were taught a great deal, and their horizons were lifted beyond the frustration and feeling of inferiority that went along with their handicaps.

Until 1968 children in special help classes were either dismissed at the eighth-grade age level, as being incapable of further education, or were placed in the regular high school track to struggle as best they could with what attention the teachers could give them and still provide for their normal pupils. To correct this situation, a special unit was created in the high school under the tutelage of a young man who had concentrated on the teaching of handicapped children. Now the high school students were placed in his charge, and were taught daily living skills and other things that would help them lead useful and happy lives. The program was very flexible. Pupils who could profit by attending some classes with other children were permitted to do so. In the new classroom building occupied in 1970, the high school special help class was given its own unit with classroom, workshop, and practice living quarters. One of the particular strengths of both the elementary and high school special help programs was that children were encouraged to participate in the work of the music, physical education, and industrial arts departments. These children also took part in extracurricular activities and lived in the cottages with other students. Sometimes problems arose between the special help students and others, but these were solved. One teacher said, when asked if the association of normal and mentally and emotionally handicapped children was good for the normal ones, that it was good because they learned tolerance and compassion for children that were different from themselves. He also said that much was demanded of them.

Certainly there were many difficulties encountered in educating the mentally and emotionally handicapped blind children, and much skill, patience, and understanding was required, but, as was pointed



out by one administrator, if the Braille and Sight Saving School did not take on the job, there would be no place where they could go. At the same time the criteria of educability were maintained. Because the line between educable and only trainable was so fuzzy, the policy was to admit children for observation and on a trial basis, and even those retained were subject to frequent evaluation. In this way the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School remained the educational institution for the visually handicapped that it had always been.



One of the most difficult groups of handicapped children to teach are the blind who are also deaf. We remember the cases of Emma Kubicek and Jessie Stewart, who won the attention of Frank Hall. In the years following, such work as there was in Illinois was carried on at the Illinois School for the Deaf, but in the 1950's Illinois sent her deaf-blind children to the Iowa School for the Deaf, where there was a program. Perkins Institution, since the days of Laura Bridgman, had had a department, as did seven other schools in the United States. A crisis arose when the Iowa School for the Deaf decided, in 1956, that they would no longer take out-of-state children. Mr. Flood, assistant superintendent Jack Hartong (to become supervisor of special education for the Department of Public Welfare in March, 1958), and staff members of the Department, along with Thomas Kline, the superintendent of the Illinois School for the Deaf, explored the possibilities of teaching the deaf-blind at the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School. It was reasoned that Illinois was one of the more populous and wealthy states in the nation and should meet this problem for itself, especially since there would be an increasing number of these children to be taken care of. That IBSSS should undertake the project rather than the School for the Deaf was indicated by the experience of the Perkins School for the Blind that the best approach to education was through the use of the fingers, first, in connection with spelling words on the hand of the child, and second, by teaching the reading and writing of braille, and the latter was the special province of schools for the blind.

For these reasons, the deaf-blind department of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School was started, and rooms were equipped in the basement of the main building. Mr. Flood and Mr. Hartong looked to the American Foundation for the Blind for guidance because that organization supported research on the problems of educating the deaf-blind. In 1957 the Foundation cooperated with

the Center for the Development of Blind Children of Syracuse University to undertake clinical evaluation of deaf-blind children. Such an evaluation was needed to understand the cause of the disability, the degree of impairment, and the possibility of success or failure through education. As we can readily understand, the evaluation of the deaf-blind child required great skill, and at the University of Syracuse a pediatrician, neurologist, ophthalmologist, speech and hearing consultant, psychologist, and an educational consultant combined their expertise to make evaluations.

Another fundamental difficulty of conducting a program for the education of the deaf-blind was finding competent teachers. As Mr. Flood said, "Some teachers give up the work after five or six years on account of the terrific impact of the arduous and nerve-wracking work." It was held that for a teacher to be happy and successful it was necessary that he possess "dedication, serenity, a zeal akin to missionary spirit, infinite patience, and willingness to be satisfied with a small measure of achievement, which is relatively great in comparison with that of normal children." Because of the strict requirements, it was difficult to recruit young teachers in 1957. The situation in 1970 was better, because several universities were training teachers for this work, and the methods of teaching were somewhat standardized. Evaluation procedures, too, were developed to the point where it was easier to determine whether an afflicted child was educable. These developments removed some of the uncertainties and confusion from teaching the deaf-blind that prevailed in 1957 when the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School opened its program.

The school was fortunate to be able to employ Burton Leavitt, a well-trained teacher of handicapped children employed by the Iowa School for the Deaf and Miss Mary O'Meara, a teacher in the deaf education department of the St. Louis public schools. The third member of the department was Mrs. Suzanne Corey, a qualified teacher of handicapped children. A fourth member of the department was Mrs. Lillian Wooldridge, who had been employed by the State of Illinois to participate in the program at Iowa.

The department started with the five Illinois children, ranging in age from ten to seventeen, who had formerly gone to the Iowa school. The pupils were housed in one of the cottages, and three cottage parents were assigned to them. The first years were difficult ones; the five children, although they had been in school for some years, had not acquired speech, and two of them seemed to be too emotionally disturbed to be educable. To get help, the school, with the financial assistance of the American Foundation for the Blind,

sent them and their mothers with Miss O'Meara to the clinic at Syracuse University, where they stayed for several days so that a complete study could be made. The results showed that the children had reached the limit of their educability, and they were returned to their homes. Understandably, the parents were disturbed and there was some difficulty in convincing them that everything possible had been done for their children. One of the consequences of this experience was a basic statement of admission policy and teaching procedures, and parents were informed of them at the time their children were accepted. The statement said that a child was accepted on a trial basis, and his retention in the program would be determined by the degree of progress he made. Because of the limitations which deaf-blindness placed upon a child, the level of education which he could achieve might be extremely limited, and parents must accept the recommendation of the staff when it was determined that the child had reached the limit of his educability and that he could not receive additional service from the program. Not only were the admission policies thus clearly stated, but the objectives of the program were formulated. Three different levels of achievement were to be realized: Level I, Independent Living—the development of personal skills such as dressing, feeding, toilet training, and partially independent travel; Level II, Communication Skills—the development of a spoken or written language which would determine the degree of success that can be expected in the school program, and the length of time that a child should remain in the program; Level III, Advanced School program—only a few deaf-blind would achieve this level, and they would enter individualized programs parallel to that of non-handicapped children, and would make use of suitable classroom and other facilities of the school at large.

In time, the deaf-blind department developed into a special services unit for visually handicapped children who could not be admitted to either the special help or the regular program. The special services unit also admitted children as young as four and a half years, because it was believed that for the deaf-blind and other multiply handicapped youngsters it was better that specialized education begin as early as possible.

As the number of children in the program increased, the unit moved from the basement of the main building to the hospital building, (a health center was opened in Main Hall and hospital functions were served by the infirmary at the School for the Deaf) and the small red brick service building was rehabilitated for use as a classroom and was known as the Little Red School House. A



fenced-in playground was also provided. The final move, made in 1968, was to one of the larger cottages where self-contained eating, sleeping, and classroom facilities were provided, although the Little Red School House continued to be used.

The types of children accepted in the special services unit, said Mr. Hartong in 1964, were "blind (or deaf-blind) and had been retarded in development for one of the following reasons: (a) environmental deprivation, (b) emotional disturbance, and (c) birth injury, or a combination of all three." Hartong went on to say "that the special services department does not require teachers of subject matter, but rather specialists—therapists in recreation and other activities, in speech correction, and physical therapy. These people are necessary because they have to do with the development of the child outside of the academic field [and] these people are better trained to cope with the problems these children present."

Basically, these statements were valid in 1970, except that the problem of finding teachers had eased. In addition to the professional staff, a considerable number of child care workers and aides were also necessary, and the school itself developed competent personnel by carrying on a child care trainee program. Also, the full cooperation of the social services department was necessary, and in 1970, a full-time worker was assigned. At that time, twenty-three children were enrolled, and it was expected that the number would rise. This was very expensive education, but the social conscience of the people of Illinois was sufficiently enlightened, and the state had such a deep tax base that it could continue to maintain its special schools. At times federal funds were granted to assist in carrying on the program. We should remember that similar services for multiply handicapped children were also available in other institutions in the Department of Children and Family Services; the School for the Deaf, the Children's Hospital-School, and the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's School were also deeply engaged in special education.

Illinois soon became a leader in the work with the deaf-blind and other multiply handicapped children. In 1962, the American Foundation for the Blind asked the school to be host for a national workshop on the teaching of the deaf-blind. The workshop, held April 9-12, considered such problems as evaluation and readiness for school attendance, and there were discussions of concepts, methods, and other teaching matters. All of these topics were pointed up by demonstrations using the children at IBSSS.

At various times since 1962, the deaf-blind and the special services program were evaluated by visiting teams. A cross-fertiliza-

tion of ideas was brought about by such occasions and by the visits which the school's personnel made to other institutions. Further, the special services program was experimental, and in 1970 it still was so to some extent. As new findings about brain damage, emotional disturbance, and other disabilities were made, they were tried out. Representative of this experimental approach was that made with the Doman-Delacato Program in 1966. This was a method for treating neurologically impaired and emotionally disturbed children that was developed at the Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential at Philadelphia. Miss Mary Fromme, a registered nurse and a trained activity therapist, was sent by the Braille and Sight Saving School to learn the Doman-Delacato method, which involved making a careful neurological and sensory evaluation, and applying what was, roughly speaking, a procedure of retraining the child by repeating the steps which he followed from birth. The child was caressed and fondled, urged to crawl, and do other things that infants learn. The object was to establish a pattern by which the child could gain physical coordination, and at the same time become emotionally stable. Miss Fromme gave instruction to the staff of the special services unit, and the method was used for a trial period. Then it was decided that the results were not commensurate with the time and effort expended, and also, since each child had a different "mix" of handicaps, a special and distinctive program had to be designed.

The special services unit had two aspects: (1) the dormitory life—where the child was taught to eat, sleep, play, and to acquire other daily living skills; (2) academic or classroom work. About the latter, one observer said,

Classroom training . . . may range from basic stimulation and manual and tactile training to higher levels of reading, writing and arithmetic. Language development is the greatest road block to the formal academic work. Some students arrive at IBSSS unable to speak any coherent words at all. After a year of intense programming, they may be able to speak fifteen or twenty words, and form only one or two sentences. Their level of word and sentence is also on a comparatively low scale. The methods of communication employed with the youngsters include print, braille, cursive writing, and finger spelling for the blind-deaf.

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In the 1960's the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School began the rebuilding of the physical plant, and this program was still in

progress in 1970. We remember that in the 1920's and 1930's under Woolston's leadership the dormitory and dining room facilities had been moved into new buildings, except that the older girls continued to live in the residence built in 1889. The main building itself had been refurbished to provide accommodations for academic, industrial arts, and music classes as well as offices for administrators, but it was clear that further modernization of the campus was necessary. At other state institutions in Illinois there was also need for modern facilities, and the increasing numbers of young people entering the state universities demanded more classrooms and laboratories. The General Assembly, recognizing that the demands for capital improvement were so great and pressing, in 1958 submitted to the voters a proposal for a bond issue of \$248,000,000 to permit construction at the state educational and welfare institutions. There was much controversy because of the magnitude of the bond issue, and the voters failed to approve it. The needs were so critical, however, that it was determined to resubmit the bonding proposal, and a campaign of publicity was begun in the press, and at public meetings by the state departments themselves, and by private groups that supported the building program. The next legislature, meeting in January, 1960, again presented a proposal that \$195,000,000 in bonds be authorized for the universities and \$150,000,000 for mental health and welfare institutions. The publicity was very extensive, and, in a period when Americans were experiencing a strong compassion for the mentally ill and other handicapped persons, and also at a time when all governments—local, state, and national—were making great efforts to improve social and educational standards to a point worthy of the great economic wealth of the United States it had a strong appeal. What is more, the bond issues for the state universities and the welfare institutions could be voted on separately, thus giving voters a chance to be selective. All these factors led to a successful referendum, and both proposals passed. The major part of the Public Welfare Building Bond Issue was marked for improving the facilities for the treatment of the mentally ill, but the educational institutions in the Department of Public Welfare also had a share.

At the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School it was decided that the following buildings had priority to a part of the bond issue: (1) a structure that would contain a school library and classrooms for the primary and elementary grades, (2) a gymnasium to replace the 1890 building, and (3) a dormitory for girls that would replace the 1889 residence. Next in order of need were a mechanical shop building for the maintenance force, and the rehabilitation of



the main building and some of the dormitories. After the bond issue was assured, planning for the three major projects went forward under the supervision of the Children's and Family Service of the Department of Mental Health. Mr. Flood and the school staff offered suggestions and stated minimal requirements, and Dr. Everett E. Wilcox, who was to assume the superintendency in September, 1962, was also consulted. Information was sought from schools in other states who were engaged in building operations. All of the suggestions were coordinated, and the architects, Nelson and Fernandes of Springfield, drew up the detailed plans. The general contractor was the R. D. Lawrence Construction Company, also of Springfield.

The three buildings were occupied in the school year 1963-1964, and the dedication was held on May 11, 1964, with Governor Otto Kerner as the speaker. The Library-Classroom Building was named the Leo J. Flood Library-Classroom Building. Mr. Flood was present and spoke briefly as he accepted the honor. Governor Kerner said,

The Leo J. Flood Library-Classroom will provide an important enrichment of the academic program. . . . In the education of the blind, braille books and recorded materials are essential to the student's educational program. This school now provides the most modern facilities for the storage and use of these educational tools. The classrooms in this building take into account the need to work with blind children in small, special groups, as well as in larger classes. Even the choice of color has been considered to provide variety and stimuli for the child who is visually handicapped but not totally blind.

The building was of light colored brick with touches of Indiana limestone; there were curtain walls containing aluminum framed windows, and above and below the windows were panels of orange colored porcelain enamel. The desirability of the bright orange panels was a subject of debate, but the purpose was to add a touch of color to an otherwise plain building. Other interesting ornamentations were the shadow walls of precast glazed building tiles in a pattern of small circles which were at each entrance.

On the first floor of the building were two classrooms for kindergartners and the spacious library room with its tables for studying and reading. There were also carrels where talking books and tape recorders could be used, and typewriters and braille writers were available. A number of periodicals in braille were in the same room.

Encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other reference books were located near the study tables. The library was much used by students. They were assigned study periods there; in the evenings it was open for recreational reading and study. Also on the first floor was a staff library of professional books and periodicals. In the basement of the building were large rooms for the storage of talking books and braille and print volumes, a room equipped with cabinets for the hundreds of items in the tactile library, and an open play area where children spent their recess periods in bad weather. At the east end of the basement was a workroom where Thermoform copies of braille materials were made. The second floor contained seven classrooms, all properly lighted and fitted with large adjustable desks and chairs so that sight savers could be taken care of. On this floor was also a room where music classes were held, and there were offices and lounges for the staff.

The building was a pleasant, cheerful place in which this writer spent many hours making use of the professional library. He felt that it was an architecturally interesting and functional structure, and its wide corridors and attractively painted walls created a feeling of spaciousness.

The second building added to the campus as a result of the bond issue was a two-story dormitory serving forty-eight students, who, in 1970, were girls of junior high and high school ages. While the economics of putting up a single, large building were achieved, at the same time the social advantages of small group living were obtained by creating four units each with its own lounge, small snack kitchen, and craft room. The building also contained residence rooms for house parents and child care assistants. In the basement was a large room useful for group meetings, receptions, and other social purposes. In outside appearance, the cottage was like the classroom building.

The handsome new gymnasium was also dedicated in 1964. It was designed to complement the swimming pool building, and was built of brick with limestone trim behind the swimming pool. The castle-like gym was demolished. There was a large room for basketball and general gymnasium activities, a small room containing the universal gym machine, and a room for wrestling practice. Offices, showers, lockers, and equipment rooms were also included, and there was a direct entrance to the swimming pool. Adjacent on the east was the athletic field.

The modernizing of the physical plant continued after the bond issue buildings were erected, and in 1967 the much needed shops for the maintenance crew were added alongside the power house

on the north edge of the campus. The perennial problem of keeping the old main building in condition to make it continuously useful received much attention, and after long deliberation and much testing of its structural soundness, it was decided in 1967-68 that it was not feasible to give it the thorough modernization and rebuilding that it needed. It did have large rooms and broad corridors, but it was expensive to heat in the winter and could not be cooled in the summer. Further the cost of maintaining the large wall, floor, and ceiling space was ever increasing. Another matter that received much consideration was the preservation of the building for its historical associations and its architectural significance. Illinois citizens were well known for their interest in preserving the artifacts of the past, knowing that they give a sense of continuity and common heritage to succeeding generations. These were strong arguments for preserving old Main, and they might have prevailed if there had been overriding architectural considerations, but the building at different times had been remodeled piecemeal and with different materials, and it had no intrinsic distinction.

But the deciding reasons for demolishing the building were that there were financially insurmountable structural weaknesses. It was entirely wood framed, although part of it was tied together with iron rods. The wood rafters, joists, and studs had deteriorated, plaster and mortar had crumbled, and walls and ceilings sagged dangerously. It was therefore decided that it should be removed, and a new building erected that would be designed for the present generations and for those of the foreseeable future. One part of the old structure, the north wing containing the auditorium was preserved, because it was of modern steel construction, having been put up in 1949-1950. It would have been simpler to remove the old building, except for the auditorium, and put up a new one on the same site, but this was impossible because there was no place where the school program could be carried on. Therefore the new building was placed immediately in front of the old building, facing East State Street, and a new front was put on the auditorium and the two buildings connected by a tunnel. There was also a ground level entrance to the auditorium, and the space between the two buildings was landscaped. The logistics of construction and carrying on school activities at the same time required careful planning and caused a number of problems for the contractor and the school staff, but they were met. Throughout the period from the summer of 1968 to the fall of 1970, construction went forward, and in time for the opening of the school in September, 1970, the new building was occupied. The old building was torn down, and the rebuilding



of the auditorium then took place, with the latter scheduled for use in September, 1971. We have mentioned that the state of Illinois was concerned to preserve its heritage, and numerous buildings of historical or architectural interest were restored. Among these was the Governor's Mansion in Springfield. Members of the committee in charge, accompanied by Mrs. Richard B. Ogilvie, the Governor's wife, visited the old Main building and selected several of the handsome bookcases, mirrors, and fireplace mantels to be placed in the Mansion.

The new classroom and administration building was an impressive structure of steel framing faced with random colored dark bricks and curtain walls of black slate for the window sections. The front facade was distinguished by a series of soaring columns topped by arches and extending the full length of the building; both arches and columns were of Indiana limestone. An open passageway or porch behind the columns went east and west from the main entrance. The arch motif was carried on around the building by the use of pilasters.

Economies of construction were achieved by creating a ground floor that was partly below grade level, and there were two upper stories. Materials such as terrazo floors in the corridors, and vinyl tiles in the rooms, aluminum framed safety glass entrance doors, and hollow wood doors in steel frames for interior rooms made for easy maintenance. Woodwork was Danish walnut, and walls were painted plaster; ceilings were suspended acoustic tiles. Corridors were wide, and all doors were inset so that no obstacles were in the way of the children as they moved from class to class. Enclosed stairways provided adequate protection if the building had to be evacuated. An automatic elevator also served all floors.

The lower, or ground floor, contained studios and practice rooms for the music department, and space for the woodworking, metal working, piano tuning, and radio repair shops. Across the hall from the shops were the household science rooms and several storage areas. On the main floor were offices for the social service, the superintendent and assistant superintendent, staff and conference rooms, and the Alumni/Historical Room. This large twenty by thirty foot room contained showcases for the collection of braille writers and other appliances, examples of handicraft done in various periods of the past, and specimens of different kinds of embossed printing. There was also an early model of Hall's stereotyper that had been used in the printing shop. The exhibits reflected the long concern of the school for writing and printing for the blind. The room also contained memorabilia such as a student desk

dating from 1854, a teacher's desk of the 1860's, and several chairs and tables used in the school, and illustrating student's work in chair caning and furniture refinishing. There was also a large bell that had been used for many years to summon the pupils to classes. On the walls were photographs of each of the superintendents, and in cabinets and files were their official papers and letters. There were also runs of reports, the Alumni Association's archives, and much other historical material. Symbolic of the modern objectives of the school was a bust of Laura Bridgman, the first deaf-blind child to be enrolled in a school in the United States.

At the west end of the new building was the health center, with its examining and treatment rooms, and on the north side of the first floor were the offices of the psychologist and the mobility instructors. The offices of the business manager and his staff occupied the rest of the north side. On the second or top floor were classrooms and laboratories for junior high and high school classes, and the self-contained special help unit. The writer followed the construction of this fine building. It was his chief impression that it was spacious enough to allow for further growth, its room arrangement was flexible, and it was especially convenient for its handicapped children because of its broad and uncluttered corridors and stairways, its elevator, and many other smaller matters. The classrooms were large so that they could accommodate the large desks made necessary by the use of thick books in braille and oversize books in large type, and the braille writers and other appliances the students used. Teachers had good facilities for storing the many tactile aids, and there were rooms where teachers could relax and talk with each other. This writer viewed the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School as being well housed for the foreseeable future, but as in the past, changes and improvements may be expected as new needs and obligations arise.

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As in so many areas of the education of the blind, the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School was in the forefront with its program of mobility and orientation. From the days of Samuel Bacon, himself a highly mobile blind man, independence and self-reliance were expected of students, and blind teachers and older children passed their skills on to the younger ones. Quite naturally the staff or cane had long been used by blind persons, but its possibilities as a means of greater mobility were first developed after the second world war, when about 1,400 blind veterans were gathered at a

United States rehabilitation center at Valley Forge. There Richard E. Hoover worked out the techniques of using a light weight cane long enough so that its tip touched the ground one step in advance of the traveler. Mr. Hoover and his associates developed the use of the cane so that it could be both a means of protection against obstacles, and a means of informing the blind man about physical surroundings such as the presence of curbs and their height, the width of door entrances, the height of steps, and much more. Along with the new travel techniques went research into the whole matter of orientation of blind persons to their environment and systematic study of these matters, including work on the physiology of the eye, general anatomy, kinesiology, and psychology. Considerable publication about the findings at Valley Forge occurred, and the great possibilities of the subject were thoroughly explored with the aid of funds supplied by the American Foundation for the Blind and government agencies concerned with rehabilitation. The matter was first brought formally to the attention of educators of blind children when Hoover led a discussion on the subject at the 1954 meeting of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind.

But the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School had established a program in 1949. At a meeting of some members of the Alumni Association cane traveling—an earlier term for mobility and orientation—was discussed and the matter was brought to the attention of Mr. Flood. He agreed that it would be a good thing to teach it at the school, and he appointed as instructor Clarence V. Richardson, a versatile blind teacher of crafts who was known for his ability to get about. Richardson read the available material on the subject and began to teach seniors on one day a week. Within a few years, Richardson was relieved of some of his craft classes and put more of his time teaching cane travel, not only to the seniors but to the juniors as well. There was but one period a week per pupil for such instruction, and Richardson did not think that this was enough, but it was the best that could be done. He also recognized that there were some limitations on his teaching, because he had to depend on others to help him observe the response of the children to his instruction on how to hold the cane and how to walk. At the same time Richardson also felt that being himself blind he could understand the problem of orientation, and this could be of special help to his pupils. Being a personal friend of Clarence Richardson, this writer had many occasions to talk with him about his work and to observe his teaching methods. It is the author's conclusion that he was most successful in passing on his extensive knowledge to his students. To acquaint the other teachers with



the value and techniques, a workshop was held in 1962, and a number of teachers later took extension courses in the subject.

But the time came for Mr. Richardson to retire from teaching. In the meantime advances had been made in preparing teachers of mobility and orientation, and graduate courses were offered by a few universities, notably Western Michigan University and Boston College. Only sighted persons were admitted, but a feature of the instruction was the use of eye shades so that prospective teachers could get the feeling of what it was like to be blind. In the year's work, students learned human anatomy, the physiology of the eye, the psychology of the blind, and subjects dealing with general education, followed by a period of internship or practice teaching. Two young men, Ned Jackson and George Kording, graduates of Illinois College in Jacksonville, took the course at Western Michigan University as recipients of fellowships from the federal government. The federal government also financed a trial period in which Jackson and Kording introduced the new concepts into the mobility and orientation program at IBSSS. Now each student received a semester of training daily or tri-weekly. The scheduling of students was flexible and suited to the ability of the child to learn. After the initial course, if further work was necessary, it was continued for another semester, and the progress of all students was evaluated at intervals and further training given when required. Mobility training was first given to seniors but by 1970 it was being given to all junior high school and high school pupils, and experiments were going forward with giving pre-cane travel to youngsters in the elementary school. Partially sighted pupils were also given such help as they needed, although most of them did not use a cane. Another feature of the program was the orientation help that was given to seniors in their home communities in the summer after graduation. An instructor spent several days with each person and helped him to become familiar with the environment. This phase of the program decreased in importance as the Illinois state services for the adult blind engaged their own mobility instructors.

Most students did not use canes for travel about the campus, but for blind students to get permission to go unaccompanied off campus, they must have received training and have the approval of the mobility staff. To earn this privilege was an incentive for students to work hard at learning cane travel. While instructors of mobility and orientation carried the major load of instruction, the matter was of concern to all staff members, and classroom teachers and cottage parents did much to reinforce the formal training and referred special problems to the instructors. In private conversation

and at parents' meetings, the mobility teachers outlined the methods and goals of the program so that work done at the school could be supported at home.

In 1969 there was an evaluation of the program by John Malamazian, Chief, Central Rehabilitation Section for Visually Impaired and Blind Veterans at the Veterans Administration Hospital at Hines, Illinois. His conclusion was that, "The well-qualified orientation and mobility specialists at IBSSS had done an exemplary job of setting up a program and carrying it out in a positive manner. They have a very good relationship with all of the staff members at the school, and have succeeded in keeping an enthusiastic atmosphere." The principal recommendations were mainly to encourage the school to continue and expand the mobility services it gave to children in the elementary grades and to the partially sighted.

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We have noted the beginnings of student extracurricular activities in Woolston's administration, and the period 1947-1970 saw a continuation and expansion. We have already observed the results of the appointment of a professional recreation worker and the work of the physical education department through intramural and interscholastic athletics. The program of the music department has also been examined. The most significant change in the period covered by this chapter was the assumption of student responsibility under the direction of the student council. Such organizations had existed for many years in the public schools, but this one appeared at the school for the blind in 1946 when Mr. Woolston, Mrs. Bruce, and Miss Brooks helped to start it. After a brief existence, it was reorganized in 1950 with the assistance of Thomas Svob, then a teacher of science. The student council, with a faculty sponsor planned and carried out such projects as the school newspaper, tryouts and election of cheerleaders, the occasional yearbook, the commencement ball, other dances, dinners, and picnics. As a major money raising project, an annual February carnival was given. The student council was a very effective organization, and its members gained excellent experience in planning, financing, and publicizing its activities. It afforded an opportunity for IBSSS student council members to keep in touch with sighted young people and with what went on in the public high schools through attendance at district and state meetings of the Illinois student council association.

The first school newspaper appeared in 1953 under the auspices of the Journalism Club, and readers were invited to suggest a

name. For two years it was known as the Braille and Sight Saving School Gazette, but in 1955, volume one, number one, of *The Banner* appeared, and in 1970 it still came out more or less regularly at monthly intervals. Printed in mimeograph form and in braille, it was a combined news and literary publication, with items about classroom events, club news, all-school events, and athletics. At various times it carried poems, short stories, and essays written by students. Three yearbooks were sponsored by students, the most recent, *The Flaming Arrow*, in 1968. It was printed in mimeographed and braille editions, and contained pictures of all high school students, teachers, and other staff members, as well as photographs of building and student activities.

The dinners, dances, picnics, special days such as dress-up day, and the honor units in the dormitories—small groups of boys or girls who had responsibility for their personal conduct and had a proctor rather than a cottage parent who lived with them—gave IBSSS a lively and student-oriented extracurricular program, and advanced the administration's efforts to develop initiative, independence, and self-reliance among students so that they could succeed when they left the shelter of classroom and cottage.

As in all schools there was much that went on in informal ways to broaden student experience, develop abilities, and break the monotony of sitting at a desk. Clubs of all sorts—stamp collecting, nature study, journalism, dramatics, ham radio, poetry, language, and many others—flourished from time to time. The special interest groups met at home room hours, or sometimes after school. The amateur radio club met in the evenings in the radio shack in the main building, and the young people engaged in the annual dramatic production gathered in the afternoon and evening for rehearsals. Elementary and primary school classes also presented skits and short plays for the assembly programs.

Major dramatic performances often had two casts so that as many as possible could participate. John R. Dietrich, who directed the plays for several years, declared that the presentation of plays offered many opportunities to add to the education of blind children because they were encouraged to develop good speech habits, gained confidence in moving about, and developed social presence. By having double casts and by distributing the jobs on the stage crews, publicity, and business management as widely as possible, many young people became involved. Dietrich said that he gave much thought to selecting a play, because elaborate settings and complicated stage business could not be achieved. As with all school dramatics, the most suitable plays were farce comedies and mysteries.



Finally, students who participated in plays were rewarded by the prestige which they received from their fellows.

Closely associated with extracurricular activities was the campus student work program. There was a time when boys in the vocational arts classes made and sold various items, usually by house-to-house solicitation. This program was dropped in 1955, because it was associated with mendicancy, and housewives bought the articles out of charity. Thomas Svob, the assistant superintendent, came up with the idea that boys and girls of high school age could be employed at jobs about the campus, and be paid for their work. At first the program was financed by federal child welfare funds, but later it was included in the school operating budget. Needy students were paid for work done outside of school hours at the telephone switchboard, in the printing shop and library, in assisting house parents in the care of younger children, and in sweeping walks, keeping the lawn free of rubbish, and so on. Some students who did not need the spending money, volunteered for these jobs. This program was continued, and not only provided spending money, but tended to develop good work habits, a sense of responsibility, and pride in personal accomplishment.

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In 1949, the Illinois School for the Blind celebrated its one hundredth birthday. It was a grand occasion that involved the whole school—students, teachers, administrators, cottage parents, maintenance men, and dietary and housekeeping workers. Planning began well before the centennial year when a committee of teachers began to assemble documentary and archival material, and artifacts of various sorts, and to plan for an impressive pageant. A proper dramatic presentation for such an occasion must be based on historical research. Miss Miriam Russel was entrusted with the task of preparing a script, and Miss Helen Sweeney undertook to collect properties and furnishings. Both of the teachers had been interested in the history of the school and later did a joint master's thesis on the educational development. The general chairman was another teacher, Mrs. Frederick G. (Mabel) Meyers, and her husband was in charge of the music. Miss Russel and Miss Sweeney wrote to alumni and friends of the school for their reminiscences and sought proper period furniture and other properties. The school buildings were searched from top to bottom for artifacts that would illustrate the past. Every effort was made to establish historical accuracy; for example, Miss Sweeney wrote to the Eastman Kodak Company for information about the type of camera that might have

been used in the 1849 scene depicting Governor French signing the bill that established the school. Costumes were loaned by the people of Jacksonville or were made following pictures of the period. Miss Russel and Miss Sweeney read carefully through the school reports and other material, and did research in city and county records to establish the exact location of Bacon's first school building. This author, being familiar with the material used by the two teacher-historians and having read the script of the pageant, can attest to the accuracy and completeness of their work.

All during the year 1948-1949, the school was deeply interested in the history of the school. It was discussed in social studies and literature classes. In the shops and sewing rooms the construction of scenery and properties was carried on. The annual play given on April 7, 1949, was "A School is Born," written by Ronald McLean, a versatile teacher of English, dramatics, and physical education. It told the story of the beginnings of the school under Samuel Bacon. Some dramatic license was taken, but it was basically accurate, and the interest of pupils was heightened. Music students, too, were involved in the historical background as they rehearsed appropriate period music to accompany the dramatic action of the pageant.

The Centennial celebration was on Thursday, June 2, 1949, beginning in the afternoon with a musical program and an address by Fred K. Hoehler, the director of the Department of Public Welfare. In the evening, the pageant was presented outdoors on a large stage erected between two tall elms on the west side of the campus. The area was lighted by overhead strings of bulbs, and the action on the stage was carried out under flood lights, with a spot to pick out the details. Mrs. Meyers and her helpers had a particular problem of putting on a performance that could be enjoyed by blind people, and there were many of them in the audience of 1,500 people. As Miss Russel wrote,

This pageant is a combination of narrative from a written text (for the blind audience) and pantomime for the sighted audience. The scenes must melt into each other, with continuous narrative. . . . [The latter] will be of two kinds: historical narrative between scenes and acts, to cover incidents in the life of the school not included in the pantomime; and descriptive narrative while the scenes are before the audience, for the information of the blind persons present. The characters on the stage may gesture but there will be no speaking of lines. Sound effects may be used to indicate activity (hammering, firebells, etc.) and music may be used to indicate period of time, a special day, celebration,

dance, and so on. Music between the acts will indicate the period in the history of our country. . . . Since our blind alumni have asked for a pageant it has been necessary to devise such a display so that it will bring pleasure to them as well as to those who see.

The actors in all scenes were students; the readers were Willard Ice, an alumnus who read from a braille script, and Ronald McLean. The pageant was as follows :

Prelude

Medley of Period Music, 1849, Alice Mathis Geisler at the organ

Elanoy, Pioneer Song, by the cast

Act I, 1849-1862

Intermission, Civil War Songs by the orchestra

Act II, 1869-1890

Pastoral Symphony by Handel, George W. Gerlach at the organ

Solo, School Song by Armeada Zell

Intermission, Songs of the Gay Nineties by the orchestra

Act III, 1890-1906

Andantino by Lemare, George W. Gerlach at the organ

Intermission, Period Music by the orchestra

Act IV, 1906-1949

Pomp and Circumstance by Elgar, Alice Mathis Geisler at the organ

To Thee, Oh Illinois (Words by Louis W. Rodenberg,

Music by Frederick G. Meyers) by the girls quartet

Finale, America, the Beautiful, by the cast and the audience

The centennial celebration was a huge success, and those who did the work received many letters of congratulation and praise. It left a permanent legacy in the deep interest aroused in the history of the school and the history of the education of the blind. The students, alumni, teachers, and all persons associated with the school, as well as the staff of the Department of Public Welfare and the public in general, were made aware of the significant leadership of the school in national and world education of the blind, and of the contributions to society of the thousands of young people who had been educated there. A more tangible result of the centennial was the establishment by the alumni, with the concurrence of Superintendent Flood and the Department of Public Welfare, of the Alumni Historical Room, and the arrangements for preserving the material evidence of the accomplishments of the school.



The continuing interest of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School in its history was manifested again in 1968 when the seventy-fifth anniversary—the Diamond Jubilee—of the invention of the braille writer and the stereotyper was celebrated. The Department of Children and Family Services cooperated with the Alumni Association in providing a bronze plaque which was placed in a temporary location on the campus, to be later moved to the entrance of the new building. The Department also sponsored a fine movie, “Bridge to Somewhere,” depicting the story of Frank Hall, the invention of the braille writer, and its effect on the education of the blind, and closed with scenes of the school in 1968.

A second feature of the Frank Hall Jubilee was the publication of a booklet, *Frank Hall and His Braille Writer*, prepared by this writer, and published by the Department of Children and Family Services. Both the film and the booklet received wide distribution among schools for the blind and among the general public. The unveiling of the plaque took place on the afternoon of June 8 in connection with the biennial meeting of the Alumni Association. The dedicatory address was given by Willard Ice, whom we have already mentioned as a graduate of the school and a lawyer who was an administrator with the State Department of Revenue. The plaque was received by the head of the Department of Children and Family Services. At the close of the ceremony, “Bridge to Somewhere,” had its premiere, and the visitors attended a reception in the new dormitory building, and viewed an exhibit of Hall writers in the school library. In the evening at the Alumni Association banquet, the speaker was Robert S. Bray, head of the Division of Services for the Blind of the Library of Congress.

The students were involved in the jubilee because the annual play was an original work, “The Story of Frank Hall,” by Mrs Floyd Cargill, a graduate of the school and a former teacher. It was a charming, lively production and was greatly enjoyed by the children.

The Hall Diamond Jubilee was tied with the state observance of the sesquicentennial of Illinois’s admission to the union, and thus the Braille and Sight Saving School made a contribution to the celebration. And, finally, the present historical account of the rise and development of the school was itself inspired by the interest aroused.

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The late 1940’s and the 1950’s were years of great activity for the Alumni Association, not only in providing entertaining pro-

grams for the biennial reunions, but in constructive projects related to the welfare of all the blind in Illinois, and in cooperating with the school in improving educational programs. The Trust Fund for making loans to blind alumni to help them in business or in college careers was opened to all blind persons in the state. In addition, a bequest known as the Tibbetts Fund was available to promote the welfare of blind persons. When this fund was incorporated with the Trust Fund, in 1968, there was \$8,500 in outstanding loans and \$6,000 in cash available for lending. The Mary Bryant Home continued to be of concern to the alumni, although after 1946 it was operated by a separate corporation, and the Alumni Association no longer had financial responsibility, but there were several alumni on the governing board, and reports about the home were often made at alumni meetings.

The mechanics of operating the Alumni Association were strengthened by changing it to a not-for-profit corporation so that it could more readily accept bequests and gifts, by providing an annual audit of its accounts, and by setting up an executive committee, variously called Board of Managers and Board of Directors, to act between biennial meetings. During the period under discussion there was a particularly active group of officers and members. The names Bradley Burson, Floyd Cargill, Richard Schrempf, Mary K. Warren, Clarence Richardson, Louis W. Rodenberg, and Homer Nowatski were among those most frequently mentioned in the minutes. Under their leadership, the ties between the Alumni Association and the Illinois Federation for the Blind were strengthened, a school affairs committee was active in matters that were felt to be for the best interests of the students, there was concern for the history and traditions of the school, and there was a successful move to change the name of the institution.

We have noted that in 1946 the Alumni Association adopted a resolution calling for a more suitable name than School for the Blind, and a committee was appointed, headed by Bradley Burson, a graduate who had a little sight, but was a braille student who later earned his Ph.D. in physics and was employed by the United States Atomic Energy Commission. The chief suggestions for the new name were Illinois School for the Visually Handicapped and Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School. After much discussion with Superintendent Flood and the teachers at the school, and among the alumni themselves, the Association in 1952 adopted the second name. There was precedent in the action of the Minnesota school in calling itself the Minnesota Braille and Sight Saving School. It was the first residential school in the United States to

introduce a strong sight saving program, and the Illinois school was the second. Dr. Burson expressed the viewpoint of many graduates of the school when he pointed out that the educational program for partially sighted children was as important as that for blind children. He echoed the view of many partially seeing graduates when he went on to say that the former were at a disadvantage when seeking jobs because they had to state that they had attended the school for the blind, and even blind persons were disadvantaged because of the name. He concluded that it would be much better if the name of the school simply indicated that it used two means of educating young people—braille and sight saving. There was not unanimity among the alumni, and some of them criticized the name Braille and Sight Saving School because it was long and awkward and required as much explanation as did the old name. But no one could suggest a better one, and so the Alumni Association gave its support to the new name, and finally in 1954 the legislature officially changed the name. Only a few schools have followed the example of the Illinois school, although some have accepted the name School for the Visually Handicapped, and some have avoided making a change, but have emphasized a name associated with a donor or the place where the institution was located—Perkins School, or Overbrook School, for example.

Following the Centennial celebration in 1949, when the alumni developed an interest in the history of the school and contributed their reminiscences or gave artifacts, the interest in such matters continued. Miss Helen Sweeney, the teacher who had been responsible for collecting such items, suggested that a room at the school should be set aside, and that the Alumni Association should provide portraits of the superintendents, book shelves, filing cabinets, and display cases, and they should continue to collect material. So it was that an Historical Room Committee was created in 1952, and Miss Beatrice Witmer and Clifford Litwiller, blind teachers, and Miss Sweeney, who had been made an honorary member of the Alumni Association, undertook to carry out the wishes of the Association. With the approval of the Department of Public Welfare, Mr. Flood cleared a large room on the second floor of the main building, and the Alumni purchased a hand built walnut display case when a local jeweler went out of business. There was also a fine walnut bookcase, a desk that had been used for many years by various teachers, and several interesting chairs and tables of value as antiques. At commencement time, June 1, 1956, the room was dedicated and opened for exhibit by Mr. Flood and Mrs. Hannah Reintz, the president of the Alumni Association. When the old building was



removed, a large and handsome Historical Room was provided in the new building, and the alumni's intention to "dignify and preserve the history of the school" and provide "a perpetual memorial to our departed members" was maintained.

The Alumni Association also undertook to memorialize those persons who had given twenty-five years or more of service, those who had given long service, but for good reasons had not reached the quarter century, and those who had made some original or exceptional contribution to the total educational program. Names of such persons were placed on small bronze plaques and mounted on a walnut panel, which was placed on a wall at the entrance of the main building. The first ten names placed on the plaque were those of Superintendents Hall, Jones, and Woolston; teachers Alice Geisler, Theodora Phillips, and Mary Reed; cottage parents Katherine Halpin and Lulu Chism; Arthur Jewell, printer; and Dr. Albyn Adams. Added in later years were the names of Louis Rodenberg, Elizabeth Brooks, Frederick G. Meyers, Dr. George L. Drennan, Superintendent Flood, George Gerlach, Frauncie Moon, Mae Sherry, and Peter B. Carroll. All of these people are mentioned in this book on earlier pages, except Dr. Drennan, who was the attending pediatrician from 1929 to 1960, Miss Sherry, and Peter (Pete) Carroll. Miss Sherry was an office worker from 1910 to 1952, for much of the time as receptionist, and thus represented the school to the public. Pete Carroll was an attendant, principally in the laundry. He was a bachelor and lived on the campus from 1911 to his death in 1954. As a cheerful homespun philosopher, he was a friend and confidant to several generations of students and teachers; even superintendents were not immune from his advice on how the school should be run. When the new building was occupied, the memorial was mounted in the corridor opposite the Alumni Historical Room. Superintendent Rhoads was honored by a plaque in the auditorium, which was named for him, and the main building was designated as Bacon Hall and a plaque attached to the outside wall. Miss Lulu Chism and Miss Katherine Halpin, house mothers, were similarly honored by plaques placed on two of the cottages. The alumni also provided the plaque designating the Flood Library-Classroom Building.

The Alumni Association was also concerned that the school maintain its high standards of education. Under the leadership of the School Affairs Committee, the Association informed itself about the need for a mobility program and a library. It also looked into the matter of admissions, debated the pro's and con's of day and residential schools, and weighed the successes and failures of the

vocational program. In all these matters the expressions of the views of the Alumni Association aided the Department of Public Welfare and the administrators of the school in reaching decisions. While some of the topics were hotly debated publicly and privately by the alumni, and occasionally individuals sought to pressure public officials, the Association itself acted wisely and responsibly, and understood fully that its resolutions on school affairs were advisory in nature.

At the biennial reunions, the superintendents gave a "state of the school" message, and in recent years, the alumni have found but few matters on which they wanted to offer suggestions, not that all individuals agree with everything that was done at the school, but because the organization itself approved of the programs in general. At the same time, the Alumni Association stood ready to express its interest and concern for school affairs when its members thought it necessary.

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Through the years after 1947, the printing shop under the direction of Louis Rodenberg continued to produce maps, music, and other teaching publications for the school. It also provided printed material for the blind people of the state. Rodenberg himself maintained his association with international efforts to improve and standardize braille music. In 1953 he was appointed to be a member and music consultant of the newly created World Braille Council organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Council (UNESCO). In 1954 he attended the Paris meeting of the International Conference on Braille Music for which he prepared a preliminary world survey of braille music which was circulated to other experts, and he incorporated their suggestions in a final survey which was the basis for discussion. In 1956 Rodenberg went abroad to attend a second conference in London on standardizing American and English usage of Grade II Revised English Braille. In 1959, in recognition of his outstanding service to the education of the blind and his literary achievements, he was granted the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by MacMurray College. Doctor Rodenberg was a modest man and seldom used his new title. The Department of Public Welfare also recognized his international reputation as a braille expert and gave him the title of Superintendent of Braille Services.

As Louis Rodenberg approached the age of retirement, he knew that different arrangements would have to be made for the print-

ing shop. It had rendered valuable services to the education of the blind throughout the United States in a period when there was a dearth of braille school material, and it still remained a principal source of braille music. The shop had also published important materials for teaching adult blind persons, and it had served many people throughout Illinois through its printing of the *Braille Messenger* and *The Living Museum*. But, great as its services had been, the fact remained that they were rendered to other constituencies than the school, and its maintenance could not be justified as a part of the school operation itself. Rodenberg recognized this, and he proposed that the legislature appropriate \$25,000 a year for the support of the braille press on the grounds that it rendered service to all the blind persons in Illinois. But it was the judgment of Superintendent Wilcox and the officers of the Children's and Family Services of the Department of Mental Health that it would be better to close the printing shop. Arrangements were made with the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville to transfer to it the thousands of embossed plates, the stock of paper, the presses, stereotype machines, and map makers. The Printing House also agreed to print the *Braille Messenger* and *The Living Museum*, and the Department of Mental Health paid for the publication until other arrangements could be made. Mr. Rodenberg retired in June, 1963, and on July 1, the printing shop was officially closed. David Stevens, a young alumnus who had graduated from Millikin University, was transferred to the library staff and became the printer of braille materials used in the school such as programs, examinations, study outlines, primers for the primary grades, and other things needed by the teachers. One of the considerations in closing the printing shop was that a new machine for reproducing braille was recently available—the Thermoform, made by the 3M Company. A paper master was made on an ordinary braille writer, and plastic copies were reproduced on the Thermoform. The quality of the braille was excellent, and for the needs of the school it did for the blind what the mimeograph did for the sight savers.

So, although there was much discussion over closing the printing shop, most of the reasons for retaining it concerned its service to blind people in Illinois, and not the needs of the school. Rodenberg himself recognized this, and when his suggestion that the press be separately funded and become a part of the state service for the blind was not followed, he accepted the situation and dismantled the shop and transferred it in an orderly manner. On his retirement he was feted by his associates at the Braille and Sight Saving



School, and he received messages of praise for his international and state activities. He remained active in his association with international braille and also edited the *Braille Messenger* in a transition period in which the publication of the paper was taken over by the Illinois Federation for the Blind. Louis Rodenberg died November 15, 1966, and was buried in Ellis Grove Cemetery near his boyhood home. His correspondence and papers concerning international braille were deposited in the Library of Congress, and many of his publications were placed in the IBSSS Alumni Historical Room.

A second change in the school involving the elimination of a non-scholastic department was the closing of the circulating library as a regional agency, and its conversion to a local branch library. It will be remembered that the braille circulating library had been established at the Illinois Institution for the Education of the Blind in 1900, and had become a part of a system of federally directed Free Circulating Libraries for the Blind in 1931. From this date the library in Jacksonville received braille books published under the supervision of the Library of Congress, and paid for by Congressional appropriations. It also distributed talking books after 1934. Its patrons were in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin. By 1959 the library at IBSSS contained more than 35,000 braille titles and 6,500 talking books. For some time the Library of Congress had been reorganizing the distribution system by concentrating its resources in larger centers, and in 1959 Robert S. Bray, Chief of Blind Services of the Library of Congress, announced plans for removing the library in Jacksonville to Chicago. The announcement disturbed members of the Alumni Association, and the school affairs committee was instructed to look into the matter and protect the interests of the blind in Illinois in obtaining books. The members were also concerned that the school would lose the advantage of having books provided by the Library of Congress. After much discussion and correspondence among the members of the Alumni Association, the school affairs committee, Mr. Flood, the Department of Public Welfare, and the Library of Congress, Mr. Bray came to Chicago in October, 1959, to explain what would be done concerning the circulating library at IBSSS. He said that separate regional libraries would be established for Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois, the latter in the Chicago Public Library. The Braille and Sight Saving School would become a branch library to serve the school itself and the blind persons living in the vicinity. The school library would continue to receive all braille and talking book titles distributed by the Library of Congress. This arrangement was agreed to by the Department of Public Welfare, and the alumni

school affairs committee reported that the interests of the school and of the blind persons in Illinois would be well served.

At the same time that the problem of the circulating library was being discussed and solved, the matter of a school library to serve the teachers and pupils at IBSSS was under consideration. All through its existence, the circulating library had also served as a school library, but the physical accommodations were not suitable for student use, and the librarian, Miss Frauncie Moon, could give only minimal attention to serving classroom and leisure time reading needs. In most Illinois schools there were library reading rooms with properly selected books, periodicals, and reference works under the administration of a professionally trained teacher-librarian who held a state certificate. Mr. Flood and the Springfield office of the Department of Public Welfare recognized that the Braille and Sight Saving School should have this kind of a library and a properly qualified person to organize and service it. The matter was brought to a head when the function of the circulating library was curtailed. Miss Moon, an alumna of the school, class of 1909, who had been employed since 1913, reluctantly retired, and in September, 1961, Miss Ruth Keyes took charge. The main room in the library building—a small red brick structure that dated from the nineteenth century—was cleared of book stacks, and reading tables and shelves for periodicals and reference books were installed. At best, this was a makeshift arrangement, and the library was finally properly housed in the Leo J. Flood Library-Classroom Building which was occupied in 1964. Since that time, Mrs. Helen C. Curtis has been the librarian.

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Still another change in the operations of the school was the abandonment of the hospital and the establishment of a health center in the main building. It was a change that had been under discussion since 1959, and was finally carried out in 1963. For some time the number of children needing overnight care had been small, and, with the almost universal immunization against childhood diseases, there was little need for the isolation of sick children. In conference with the superintendent of the School for the Deaf, it was decided that ill children who needed bed care, or who could not be sent to their homes, would be taken care of in the recently remodeled infirmary at the School for the Deaf. The Health Center at IBSSS would be manned from six in the morning till ten at night by three registered nurses, rather than the five who were necessary to run the hospital. If emergencies occurred after ten o'clock, cot-

tage parents reported to the nurse in charge at the School for the Deaf, and she took appropriate action. In general the plan worked well. Through the administrative skill of Mrs. Edna M. Greenler, supervising nurse at IBSSS since 1952, cooperation between the schools was good. The hospital building was converted to needed classrooms for the department of special services. In the new building, occupied in 1970, there were excellent facilities for the examination and treatment of children by the pediatricians, dentists, and ophthalmologists who serve the school.

Mr. Flood retired in June, 1962, as he had planned, and the Department of Mental Health began a nation-wide search for a man who had broad experience in the education of visually handicapped children. After interviewing several candidates, it named Everett E. Wilcox, then Special Educational Program Director for the American Foundation for the Blind. A graduate of Willamette University (he was a native of the Far West, and was reared in Wyoming and Oregon), he earned his master's and doctor's degrees at the University of Oregon. He began his career at the Oregon School for the Blind as a cottage parent and teacher. After serving in World War II, he was with the Veterans Administration as a service officer concerned with special care of blind and handicapped men. From this post he went back to the Oregon School for the Blind as principal and later became superintendent. At the time he came to the Braille and Sight Saving School he was forty-nine years old.

Dr. Wilcox, with his broad background as teacher and administrator, was well qualified to take over the superintendency. He made no sudden changes, and he quickly won the confidence of teachers and other employees and consulted with them about school matters. In an "inaugural message" (this writer's words) in the *Braille Messenger* he said,

Illinois is to be commended as it keeps abreast of the trends that are developing in the education of blind children. This is evident in the awareness of services that should be extended to the multiply handicapped blind children and the development of a deaf-blind program that has national recognition. The concern and interest here to develop an adequate program of instruction in orientation and mobility skills not only for the children but for all blind persons is ahead of the general trend in this country. . . . The wide variety of resources available throughout the state for visually handicapped children will assist in expanding an educational program to serve all blind children. The opportu-



nities for educational research in the area of the visually handicapped not only are here, but resources are convenient to seek solutions to basic problems that have been evident for some time. We can continue the pioneering effort that has long been associated with the Illinois School.

Much of Wilcox's attention was given to the planning and utilization of the library-classroom building, the new cottage, and the gymnasium, all of which were under construction. He was also deeply involved in the transfer of the presses and stereotype plates to the American Printing House. In-service training of cottage parents, and carrying out the policy of the Department of Mental Health to recognize employees of long service also received his attention. He also advanced the state policy that older employees take advantage of the retirement provisions of the personnel code. Dr. Wilcox resigned at the end of the 1963-1964 school year to accept the superintendency of the California School for the Blind.

The burden of the transitional periods between the administrations of Flood and Wilcox and Wilcox and Hartong was born by the assistant superintendent, Thomas Svob, who had been at the school since 1947, first as a teacher of mathematics and science. He was a graduate of Western Illinois University and had experience as a public school teacher. He served as an officer in the Navy during World War II. In 1949 he earned his master's degree in education from the University of Illinois, and had additional advanced work in administration and supervision. When Mr. Hartong left the school in 1958 to take a position in Springfield, Mr. Svob became principal of the high school and assistant superintendent. So varied were (and are) the duties of principal and assistant superintendent that it is difficult to point to the fields in which he had a personal interest, but two do stand out: his concern for students affairs, and the preparation of students for careers. He was active in organizing and working with the student council, and worked closely with the vocational rehabilitation representative on the campus. He was also instrumental in starting the campus student work program which was so successful in developing good work habits for those students who took jobs after they left school.

Closely associated with the administration of the school was Miss Rose McGuire, a quietly efficient teacher since 1931, who became supervising teacher of the elementary grades in 1957. She assumed much responsibility for the curriculum, the selection of teaching aids, and the planning of day-to-day operations in the classrooms.

When Wilcox resigned, the superintendency went to Jack R.

Hartong, who began his career as a teacher at the school in 1943. He was a graduate of Illinois College, and after service in the second world war, he attended the University of Wisconsin and the University of Illinois and received his master of education degree in school administration at the latter. When Flood became superintendent after the death of Woolston, Hartong became principal and assistant superintendent. In this post he introduced modern methods of keeping records of students, and with Miss Rose McGuire, the elementary school supervisor, he revised curriculum planning, lesson preparation, and systematic in-service training for the teaching staff. He also worked to upgrade the academic preparation of teachers who were on the job, and to set higher standards for initial employment. In 1958 he left the school to become special education coordinator in the Department of Public Welfare. When that department was reorganized as the Department of Mental Health, Hartong became chief of the institutional unit with supervision over residential schools, from which position he moved in 1964 to the superintendency of the Braille and Sight Saving School. In a sense he never left the school because, in his job in Springfield he supervised many of its activities. The experience as a state supervisor greatly expanded his knowledge of the whole field of special education, and his administrative skill was deepened and enlarged. He also learned about the inner workings of the state government so far as it was related to the field of children and family welfare. In his position in Springfield he was concerned with the conversion of the Children's and Family Services of the Department of Mental Health to the new code department of Children and Family Services, and he had an intimate knowledge of the present and future of special education in the state residential schools.

Consequently when Wilcox resigned, Hartong stepped into the superintendency easily. The modernization of the school which had been going on since the late 1950's, and which he had helped to plan, continued. He was completely dedicated to the idea that the Braille and Sight Saving School had a three-fold obligation (1) to provide superior education for all educable visually handicapped children who could not be taken care of in their home communities, (2) to accept not only "normal" visually impaired children, but those who also had other physical disabilities, and those who also had emotional and/or mental problems, and (3) in taking in all educable children, to accept the idea that "educable" was a flexible term that referred to the whole child, and that it included social, physical, and personality development. To carry out these obligations, the school must provide a three-track system, (1) regular,

for those children who are "normal," (2) special help, for those who, for the most part, can follow a classroom routine, but who have emotional or other handicaps, and (3) special services, for the deaf-blind, the brain damaged, or those with handicaps so serious that a special kind of living and learning situation is required. It was Hartong's concern that no one of these programs be neglected in favor of another. Finally he kept in mind that no child should be stalled on one track without frequent evaluations and that it should always be possible for a child to move from one track to another, or that the tracks might be combined.

Mr. Hartong also directed the up-grading of cottage parents so that they became a part of the total educational process, and he fostered the faculty development program so that teachers might keep abreast of educational changes. Some parts of the faculty development program were financed by federal funds. Such curricular innovations as mobility and orientation, the tactile aids center, and the social hygiene course also have been financed initially by grants from the federal government inspired by the national concern to improve education in all its aspects. These funds were supplementary to those provided by Illinois, which, in recent years, has put large sums of money into its educational system. It was Mr. Hartong's obligation to initiate projects and to see that funds were spent wisely. His general knowledge of the workings of state government along with his intimate understanding of the needs of the Braille and Sight Saving School were helpful in achieving this end.

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We bring this history to a close as of the end of the school year 1969-1970, and we observe that the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School through the century and a quarter since Samuel Bacon came to Jacksonville, has served well the needs of the visually handicapped children of Illinois. Through the work of Frank Hall, Louis Rodenberg, John B. Curtis, and others, it has contributed significantly to the advancement of the education of the blind throughout the world. Since 1900 Illinois has been one of the larger and wealthier states, and its institutions have generally been well financed and forward looking. Certainly this has been so at the Braille and Sight Saving School. In addition to being among the first in the nation in the use of braille, it has been a leader in other ways. From the days of Joshua Rhoads it made use of books and reading and writing to make its students literate, and it early adopted the talking book as a means whereby students could acquire informa-



tion. It engaged in testing programs concerned with the use of these two methods of learning, and one of its staff members, Clifford Litwiller, and two older students have been engaged in a national test of the Visatoner, a device for reading directly from ink print by means of audible signals emitted by an electronic scanner.

Education of the partially sighted by special methods, now universally accepted in residential schools, was pioneered by the Illinois school along with two or three other institutions. The Illinois school was first to add social hygiene to the curriculum and it was among the first to provide education for the deaf-blind. In many other areas—mobility and orientation, the use of power tools in industrial arts, and the development of low vision, to name a few—the school has been in the forefront of the education of the blind. The school has contributed significantly to the scientific study of various aspects of the psychology and learning abilities of the blind, through the use of its facilities by researchers at universities, the American Foundation for the Blind, the American Printing House, and other institutions. It has not developed a research department of its own, because it has quite properly applied its funds to the immediate task of education while at the same time making use of the results of research.

The measure of the success of any school is in the achievements of those who have been educated there. The deep feeling of devotion and gratitude of the alumni and former students for the good influence of the school on their lives has often been expressed by individuals and by the Alumni Association itself. Many have said that attendance at the school gave them a better start in life than they could ever have obtained in their own communities, although they have admitted that they had problems of adjustment that are today met by the policy of transfer into and out of local schools. Numerous graduates and former students have made satisfying careers for themselves in private employment, and a few have become well known as lawyers, judges, physicians, scientists, clergymen, musicians, and teachers. A number of the latter have gone to other schools as teachers and administrators. The strong ties between the school and its former students have been demonstrated by the large numbers that return every two years to renew their associations with the school.

The End











